

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT: *The present study is an attempt at mapping the attitude of students towards affirmative action in Brazilian universities, relying on analytical tools by Martin (2000), Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005), for describing attitude from a systemic functional perspective. To best collect samples of opinion at a collective level, a focus group interview and a corpus of student answers were used. The results suggest that both quota and non-quota students' appraisal of affirmative action implies a positive attitude towards the policy itself; however, there is also evidence of a largely judgemental stance towards the government and the university system as a whole.*

KEY-WORDS: *Appraisal, affirmative action, the quota system, prejudice*

RESUMO: *O presente estudo busca mapear a atitude de estudantes em relação a políticas de ação afirmativa na universidade pública brasileira, com base em categorias analíticas de Martin (2000), Martin & Rose (2003) e Martin & White (2005) para o estudo da avaliação na linguagem, no quadro da lingüística funcional sistêmica. Para coletar dados que reflitam uma atitude coletiva, foi escolhido o método de grupo focal, associado a uma coleta de dados escritos. Os resultados sugerem que tanto cotistas quanto não-cotistas posicionam-se favoravelmente em relação às políticas de ação afirmativa; no entanto, há evidências de uma avaliação baseada em critérios éticos, voltada para o governo e para o sistema de ensino superior.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Avaliação, ação afirmativa, o sistema de cotas, preconceito*

1. Introduction

In 2003, affirmative action was implemented in two public sector Brazilian universities. As a result, the selection process of 2003 entrance exams at the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), reflected a Rio state-level law, which required that 50% of its places be reserved for students from schools from the public sector, with another 40% available for students of African descent. This policy has had a noticeable impact both on the institution as a whole, and on the teaching staff in particular. Teachers have thus had to re-think their practices in the face of an experience which challenges the monolithic nature of conventional academic culture. However, the most striking impact of affirmative action as a policy for university admission has been on the targeted student public. On the one hand, there are students who have been inserted within what was otherwise a largely white academic community and, on the other, there are those who have come from economically deprived backgrounds. In both cases, the results of these juxtapositions of students from varied backgrounds have intensified public debate. To some, the new policies are seen as actually promoting racial tension in public sector universities; for others, they have been instrumental in reinforcing the public (or democratic) nature of Brazilian public sector universities.

According to 2006 UNESCO statistics, more than 50% of Brazilians live below what is considered a suitable life standard; in a recent survey more than 50% of Brazilian citizens claimed to have African ancestry, thus making Brazil the country with the second largest population of inhabitants of African descent in the world, following Nigeria. Despite widespread public debate in Brazil on the controversial topic of affirmative action, in both the press and the media, little space has been offered to hear the voices of those students afforded university places within the new regulations. The purpose of the present paper is thus to explore the nature and possible ramifications of the impact of these developments. Specifically, it will focus upon the attitudes more often foregrounded when affirmative action students (both newcomers and those who are now attending their third academic year) are provided with a platform for voicing their opinions towards the policy as a whole, and towards their place within academic life. To this end, the research explores two types of corpora: a written corpus made up of short reports and an oral corpus, to be precise, a recorded focus group session with the students in question, each from 2005. The analyses of both the reports and the transcript attempts to gauge students' opinions regarding

affirmative action for admission of students to Brazilian universities using the categories and concepts of Appraisal analysis, as described by Martin (2000), Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005).

2. The study of attitude in text

Evaluation, Stance or Appraisal are umbrella terms which incorporate the studies of expression of the speaker's or writer's "... viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about" (Thompson and Hunston, 2000: 5). A study of Attitude/Evaluation/Stance may also include speaker assessment of both desirability and likelihood of an event (epistemic modality). The expression of speaker/writer's attitude, however, presents countless problems for linguistic analysis.

In the first place, attitude-related studies tend to focus on the levels of grammatical, semantic or pragmatic analysis. Precht (2000: 20) claims that grammatical studies tend to start with those parts of speech which have traditionally been described as expressing attitude and then, taking a comparative focus, compare the use of these parts of speech within, for example, novice and expert text or native and non-native English. In a similar way, semantically-oriented studies of attitude establish, a priori, meaning categories associated with attitude, and then focus on comparing these across different genres or across different levels of use. Pragmatic studies are often "close examinations of texts for the purpose of assessing stance functions in terms of politeness"; however their aims are often to compare choices across genres and language ability.

A second hurdle for linguistic approaches to attitude/stance is deciding where and how to draw a line between representational/descriptive meaning (i.e., *'His eyes are **brown**' = this is the colour of his eyes*) and attitudinal/evaluative meaning (e.g. *'His eyes are **brown**' = since brown eyes are a token of beauty in this part of this world, I am, in fact, saying that he has beautiful eyes*'), a distinction which is analytically complex. As far as Evaluation/Attitude/Stance studies are concerned, there are as many varied approaches as there are terms, categories and analytical models. Biber et al. (1999), for instance, have analysed Stance from a wider perspective in an attempt to encompass the expression of personal feelings, attitudes, value judgements and assessments. Following Biber et al., Precht (op.cit.) has investigated the most common co-occurrence of stance markers in English by using a multi-dimensional analysis of the Longman Corpus of Spoken and Written English. Other researchers, however, have restricted their analyses to aspects of stance, namely

affect (Biber and Finegan, 1989), hedging (Hyland, 1998) and modality (Simpson, 1993).

In addition to the problems inherent in overlapping terms and focal points, a further major difficulty in the field of linguistic investigation of writer attitude, as Thompson and Hunston (op.cit.: 13) have argued, is the lack of a consensus among linguists on the best way of delimiting the areas which may be covered by studies of attitude. Thus, the phenomenon may encompass lexical, grammatical and textual structures, attitudinal, interpersonal and discourse-organizational functions, pragmatic inferences, as well as both conventional and context-dependent meanings. On the same page, the same authors claim that identifying Evaluation/Attitude/Stance "is a question of identifying signals of comparison, subjectivity and social value...anything which is compared to or contrasts with the norm".

2.1. A general view of the Appraisal framework

One of the more recent studies of attitude in text is the framework developed by the Functional Systemicists, namely Martin (1995, et seq.), Martin and Rose (2003), Martin and White (2005). In their view, the conceptual space of attitude, or Appraisal framework, is characterized by three major semantic fields, namely AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION. Their studies also cater for sub-systems which mark speaker commitment and gradation of evaluation, as defined in Table 1:

		Focus	Orientation
AFFECT		Emotions and feelings	Appraiser oriented
APPRAISAL	JUDGEMENT	Human behaviour	Appraised oriented
APPRECIATION		Objects/states of affair	Appraised oriented

Table 1: A framework for Appraisal

As Table 1 implies, an understanding of the linguistic resources of Appraisal enables us to investigate (cf. White, p. 2006, web page), for example:

a. the idiosyncratic differences of an individual writer (the appraiser) by which they may show to be more or less engaged,

emotionally or judgementally towards people, places, things, happenings and states of affairs;

b. the target of appraisal (the appraised) in any individual piece of work;

c. the way in which a writer may construct different authorial voices and textual personas by means of positive or negative evaluative lexis (shifts in the appraiser attitude);

d. the underlying value systems which shape a writer's text and the way in which the writer uses these systems to interact with textual partners, either implicitly or explicitly;

e. the assumptions, beliefs, values and expectations which writers make about their audience's value and belief systems — presumed, presupposed or taken as given.

Thus, one of the advantages of the Appraisal framework is that it avoids focussing exclusively on certain grammatical items or particular pragmatic features. Rather, it caters for those utterances which can be interpreted as indicating that some person, thing, situation, action, event or state of affairs is to be viewed either positively or negatively. As a consequence, there are various ways in which attitude can be conveyed or invoked. Attitudinal meanings may be carried by utterances, by complete propositions, as well as by individual words, and are viewed within the Appraisal framework in the context of the larger text in which they operate.

2.2 The three sub-types of Attitude: AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION.

Within the Appraisal framework, Attitudinal meanings may target various goals and are thus divided into three subcategories, namely AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION. The definitions below have been derived from White (2001).

2.2.1 AFFECT

AFFECT is concerned with emotions, with positive and negative responses and dispositions. Affect entails the kind of evaluation by means of which the writer/speaker indicates how they are emotionally disposed to any person, thing, happening or state of affairs. AFFECT may be indicated in the following ways:

- through verbs of emotion (Mental Processes) such as *to love/to hate, to frighten/to reassure, to interest/to bore, to enrage/to placate* (*Your offer pleases me, I hate chocolate.*)
- through adverbs (typically Circumstances of Manner) such as *happily/sadly* (*Sadly the government has decided to abandon its commitment to the comprehensive school system.*)
- through adjectives of emotion *happy/sad, worried/confident, angry/pleased, keen/uninterested* (*I'm sad you've decided to do that, I'm happy she's joining the group, She's proud of her achievements, he's frightened of spiders, etc),*
- through nominalisation (the turning of verbs and adjectives into nouns) *joy/despair, confidence/insecurity* (*His fear was obvious to all, I was overcome with joy*)

Values of AFFECT may operate with multiple evaluative targets. Speakers/writers may evaluate a certain entity or situation in terms of an emotional response, or may direct the evaluation at themselves, by demonstrating emotions which are likely to be seen as appropriate, or just, or, at the very least, sympathy-evoking. The two processes are interconnected — the writer/speaker may emotionally evaluate some third party while simultaneously presenting themselves for evaluation via that emotion.

The inclusion of AFFECT in a text has the potential to position the reader attitudinally. When the writer attributes an emotion to a social actor, this may be expected to provoke either a sympathetic or unsympathetic response in the reader/listener towards this social actor. If readers either endorse the emotional response, see it as praiseworthy, justified, or at least understandable, then they are more likely to be positively disposed to that social actor generally. If readers, on the other hand, see the reported emotions of the social actor as destructive, perverse, unwarranted or incomprehensible, then they are more likely to be negatively disposed to that actor in general terms.

2.2.2. JUDGEMENT

If AFFECT is concerned with emotional states and responses, JUDGEMENT, on the other hand, is that category of Appraisal which deals with "normative assessments of human behaviour" (White, 2001). What is evaluated within the heading AFFECT is something which gives rise

to an emotional response. When it is the author of a text who voices his/her own emotional responses and states, the text becomes strongly personalised. In contrast, JUDGEMENT is a category which criticises or praises, which condemns or applauds the behaviour, the actions, deeds, sayings, beliefs, motivations etc, of human individuals and groups, by referring to rules or conventions. Values are presented as qualities of the thing being evaluated rather than of the person doing the evaluating. As a consequence, values of JUDGEMENT are not as personal as the values of AFFECT. What is presented in the text are the writers' cultural values and parameters.

Judgemental values are, therefore, directed towards morality, legality, capacity, normality and will always be fleshed out from the appraisers' culture, or by their own individual experiences, expectations, assumptions and beliefs. Thus, depending on the ideological position of the appraiser, these values may clash with those of the reader.

Examples of JUDGEMENT carry a heavy weight socially as they involve assessments by reference to systems of legality/illegality, morality/immorality or politeness/ impoliteness. Other values of JUDGEMENT involve assessments of normality and of psychological disposition.

2.2.3. APPRECIATION

The third element of Attitude is termed APPRECIATION, a subcategory which encompasses those assessments of objects, processes and states of affairs, and their form, appearance, construction, presentation or impact. APPRECIATION shares with JUDGEMENT the property of being oriented towards the *appraised* rather than the *appraiser*. As a consequence, values of APPRECIATION and JUDGEMENT are less personalising than those of AFFECT.

2.2.4. Difficult analytical areas

APPRECIATION is concerned with composition, structure or form, with the question of how well the parts of the entity under evaluation fit together. Another sub-type of APPRECIATION considers whether the object appraised is pleasing or displeasing 'to the senses'. White (2001) stresses the fact that when the values make reference to, or are derived from, values of AFFECT (emotion), the analysis may present complications. For example, in the sentence "A depressing/captivating/sight met our eyes" the terms *depressing/*

captivating may indicate AFFECT, rather than APPRECIATION. However, as White explains, the emotional reactions of *depress and bore* are detached from the appraiser and attached to the things appraised. To say ‘X bores me’ means to say more about me, the appraiser (AFFECT) than ‘the building is boring’ (APPRECIATION).

Another shady area is the line between JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION. There are cases where the grammar is ambiguous as to whether it is human behaviour, or an object/entity/state of affairs which is being assessed, for instance, in ‘It’s a brilliant plan.’ Or in ‘It’s a brilliant outcome’. White claims that it is worth pursuing the fine analytical distinctions between (1) ‘The design team planned brilliantly for all eventualities’ and (2) ‘It was a brilliant plan covering all eventualities’. It is not so much that the category is one of JUDGEMENT or APPRECIATION, but whether what is being evaluated is human behaviour (JUDGEMENT) or the products of human behaviour (APPRECIATION). White further explains that context is of utmost importance, leading the analyst towards one category rather another, towards seeing a particular appraisal more about human behaviour (and hence involving JUDGEMENT), than about the qualities of some entity (and hence involving APPRECIATION).

In a more recent version of the system, Martin and White (2005: 73) develop their framework further as they acknowledge that a possible way out of the analytical impasse pointed out above may be to describe every clear-cut example of JUDGEMENT or APPRECIATION as containing what they call ‘inscribed’ attitude. By the same token, what is not foregrounded in inscribed JUDGEMENT (or APPRECIATION) will of necessity be a token of evoked APPRECIATION or JUDGEMENT, respectively. In other words, to openly criticize a law setting up affirmative action, the appraiser may evoke a covert criticism of the ‘law-makers’ themselves.

A final word of warning regarding those analyses which attempt to reflect what is going on in discourse is provided by Eggins and Slade (1997:126) when they claim that

“the interpretation of the meaning of lexical items is not only dependent on the co-text but also on the sociocultural background and positioning of the interactants. Appraisal analysis must therefore be sensitive to the potential for different readings or ‘hearings’ of attitudinal meanings”.

These will, of necessity, include those of the analyst.

2.5. Analytical Consequences of the Appraisal framework

Appraising, evaluating, inscribing attitudes in texts is a fundamental characteristic of verbal behaviour. By appraising events in different ways, the speaker/writer invites the audience to share different responses. When the text is padded with AFFECT, the reader/listener is invited to regard it as adequate, well motivated, or at least as understandable. If the pact between reader/writer is accepted, solidarity or sympathy is brought about. When the invitation to share the emotional response is not taken up, then solidarity or sympathy will most probably be diminished. By the same token, if a text is padded with judgement, readers may be inclined to partake in those judgmental values with the writer, or, alternatively, reject those values as belonging to another set of ideological principles which are not theirs.

3. Methodology

This section of the paper will focus, albeit briefly, on the methodology used both for data collection and analysis. Firstly, however, it is necessary to side-track somewhat in order to include a short but necessary discussion on the difference between ‘opinion’ and ‘attitude’, and collection of data which may represent one and the other.

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993:1) ‘attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor’. Opinions, however, are the cognitive, affective or behavioural responses that reveal these underlying psychological attitudes (Myers, 2004: 8). In other words, an analysis of the language of opinion is a way into unveiling attitude.

As an illustration, Myers (op.cit.) cites opinion surveys. This method of data compilation focuses on opinion which is individual and potentially different from that of ‘the next person down the street’. However, and because opinions tend to cluster by groups which may be either regional, racial or social, the final results of the survey work is to disclose whatever clusters may have been formed, i.e., the group’s attitude.

In the present study, the technique of data collection adopted was that used successfully in two previous studies into the language of opinion, namely Zyngier and Shepherd (2003) and Balocco et. al.’s (2005). Thus,

the oral input of focus group discussions and the written input of individual written answers, provided anonymously, were compared. The principled basis for this type of data collection matches Myers' (2006: 71) argument that "all expressions of opinion begin in interactions".

The focus group discussion involved six affirmative action students. They were moderated by a senior student who had been trained in eliciting opinions from the group, by helping them ground their views on their own individual experience while also helping them mark others as public domain. The participants were given two short newspaper letters-to-the-editor in which readers voiced their opinions pro and against affirmative action.

The written data were less obviously interactive. However, this was compensated by the fact that they were provided anonymously by both quota students, who were attending extra remedial courses, and non-affirmative action students. These students were asked to respond to the following prompt, originally given in informal Portuguese, their mother tongue: "Dear Student, we would like to ask your cooperation so that we can collect the perceptions of UERJ students regarding the system of quotas adopted here. You needn't identify yourself".

Both sets of data were transcribed and digitized and were analyzed manually. The diagram representation adopted both in Martin and White (2005) and throughout most of the analyses on www.grammatics.com as in

Instantiation ¹	Appraiser	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Appraised

failed to prove effective in the case of the interaction from the focus group. However, this ineffectiveness resulted not from the representation, but is more a comment on the nature of the data, i.e., containing false starts, self-repairs, hesitation phenomena, which made line by line analysis impossible.

4. Distribution of Appraisal in the data

Compared to the other two dimensions of evaluation (APPRECIATION and JUDGEMENT), there is very little codification of attitude as AFFECT, in either the written or the oral corpus. However, it appears useful to focus on the few but significant occurrences of AFFECT, both positive and negative, as in the examples below:

Example 1: *...but well, here at least in the two semesters that I have been here, I didn't feel, thank God, I didn't feel, my friends, here is Isabela around and, like, there is no prejudice against, either quota or non-quota students teachers, all right, everybody is on the same footing, get it? [= ...mas assim, aqui pelo menos nesses dois períodos que já estou aqui, não senti, graças a Deus, eu não senti, meus amigos, ta aqui, a Isabela de passagem e, tipo, não tem preconceito contra, cotista ou não cotista, professores, ta, todo mundo numa igualdade, sabe?]*

Example 2: *Personally speaking, the quota system has harmed me (has caused me a lot of harm): I missed two years of school life....[= Particularmente, o processo de cotas me prejudicou muito: me fez perder dois anos da minha vida escolar...]*

In [2], negative AFFECT is implicit, realized as a surge of emotion, experienced as a reaction to an external agency (Martin, 2000, p. 149): the public policy is the external agency responsible for the student's negative feelings, the feeling that one has been damaged. This is particularly clear in the emphasis placed on the emoter: *it harmed me* (= I feel bad about the policy as it has done me a lot of harm).

In contrast to example [2], example [1] features positive AFFECT: the student begins by framing her attitude towards the policy in explicit affective terms (*I didn't feel...*) only to reframe it as a more objective stance towards the policy: *there is no prejudice against quota students*. In spite of the strategy of reformulation in the student's discourse, the statement with an interruption suggests that there may be an important affective dimension to the issue of prejudice against quota students. The attempt itself at reformulating the issue, i.e., by interrupting its codification as an affective response, and working towards constructing it as a "constative" statement, pays lip service to the idea that prejudice against quota students is a controversial topic which requires careful wording.

All occurrences tagged are expressions of attitude codified as Realis AFFECT, that is, these are affective responses to the public policy, codified, not as projections, or feelings predicated of the future, but

rather as present dispositions. The only exception here is an occurrence, in the written corpus, of what could be considered AFFECT as 'Comment' (Martin, 2000: 149):

Example 3: *I wish the public policy continued until there were improvements in the public school system....* [= que o sistema continue até a tão esperada melhoria na educação pública....]

It was felt that, in this example, AFFECT is construed as positive on account of the desiderative element (*I wish it continued*) expressed through the subjunctive form. This is a particularly effective argumentative device for construing a positive emotional response to the public policy, but at the same time acknowledging its temporal limitation (*until there were improvements in the public school system*), which functions as a form of concession to interlocutors who hold a different view on its efficacy. The values of AFFECT are mostly graded as HIGH, as in the following examples:

Example 4: *It bothers me very much* [= me incomoda muito]

Example 5: *I was really deluded/ trapped into believing that....* [= eu fiz realmente iludida...]

Example 6: *This [= the public policy] was very harmful to me* [= me prejudicou muito]

Example 7: *I am deeply grateful [to the public policy]* [= me sinto profundamente grato]

However, there are also expressions of median value AFFECT:

Example 8: *It [= the public policy] avored me* [= me favoreceu]

Example 9: *I didn't have any difficulties, neither did I feel discriminated* [= não encontrei dificuldades, nem discriminação].

The occurrence of high values of AFFECT in both the oral and in the written corpus suggests that the students are aware of the need to work with care on their specific discursal comments, if they are to convince their peers to share their emotional response to the public policy.

As far as the expression of APPRECIATION is concerned, what is striking in the first place is that expression of this attitude is rarely found in the oral corpus; in contrast, the short reports include several instances of

this subcategory of Appraisal. This might be related to what is appraised in each of the corpora. In the written corpus, the appraisers tend to focus on the quota system from the outset of their texts, perhaps influenced by the prompt which specifically asks them to do so. In the spoken corpus, however, students also assess the educational system as a whole, the university entrance examination, privately owned and public sector universities, in addition to the law which regulates the Brazilian educational system. These differences may be related to the distinct genres produced by the participants, but also it may have to do with respondent bias. In other words, while the written text is the result of reflection on a pre-established topic, the focus group allows for more variety of issues to be discussed. Furthermore, whereas the focus group was mediated by a university undergraduate, the prompt for the answers for the written corpus specifically mentioned the name of the lecturers who were going to be involved in analysing and classifying the answers.

Although the subsystem of APPRECIATION includes the kind of attitudinal meaning which has to do with appraisers' aesthetic opinions of texts, cultural products, performances, entities, natural phenomena or processes, there are no examples of aesthetic evaluation in its strict sense. Examples, mainly from the written corpus, seem to imply that the quota system is viewed as a "product" – the state law itself – or an issue, i.e., the consequence of the enforcement of the law. Appraisers, thus, evaluate the validity of the system both positively and negatively as evidenced in the data below:

Example 10: *The quota system is a good initiative/beginning beyond any doubt / There is no doubt that the quota system is a good initiative* [= Que o sistema de cotas é uma boa iniciativa não resta dúvidas]

Example 11: *I believe that the quota system is an excellent program* [= Creio que o sistema de cotas é um excelente programa]

Example 12: *I consider the quota system highly discriminatory* [= Considero o sistema de cotas altamente discriminatório]

Of the three semantic domains of APPRECIATION (REACTION, COMPOSITION and VALUATION), [10] and [11] refer to REACTION, since what seems to count is the quality associated with the system or its likeability. In [12], *highly discriminatory* seems to indicate negative valuation, for the writer might have selected the epithet to refer to an often debated issue concerning affirmative action policies: whether they promote equality or discrimination. In doing so, the writer seems to be

drawing on criteria usual in the legal field of discourse to evaluate the social significance of the policy.

Out of the 17 quota students who produced the short reports, only one considers the public policy negative; out of the remaining sixteen, 8 pointed to problems that still need to be solved, but their attitude towards the adoption of affirmative action for admission to universities is positive. One of the 7 non-quota students openly criticizes the system (see Example 12 above), but all the participants were able to perceive both the pros and cons of the policy. This result matches the strategy chosen by the writers to voice their opinions. In 14 of the 24 written texts produced, the subjects have tried to demonstrate that they were looking at both sides of the issue, as well as monitoring their reader's expectations:

Example 13: *I think the quota system is needed today, but I also agree that this quota policy needs to be better thought out* [= Acho que hoje é necessário que haja o sistema de cotas, mas eu concordo também que essa política de cotas precisa ser melhor trabalhada (sic).]

Example 14: *The quota system helped many students to enter university, but it left a lot to be desired in the way it was implemented.* [= O sistema de cotas ajudou muitos alunos a ingressar na universidade, mas deixou a desejar na forma como foi implantado.]

Example 15: *The quota system has made many students' admission to UERJ a lot easier [...] and this is good. On the other hand, the number of places for non-quota students has gone down, and this has made the entrance examination more competitive* [= O sistema de cotas facilitou o ingresso de muitos alunos na UERJ. [...] E isso é muito bom. Por outro lado, o número de vagas para “não-cotistas” diminuiu, tornando, de certa forma, o vestibular mais competitivo.]

Example 16: *The quota system, as an emergency measure, is valid/worthwhile. However, this measure may end up permanent, and thus fail to solve the real problem, which makes it difficult for black and public sector school students to enter university* [= O sistema de cotas, como medida emergencial, é muito válido. No entanto, esta medida pode acabar se tornando permanente, não resolvendo a verdadeira causa da dificuldade de acesso de alunos de escolas públicas e de negros.]

All the examples above display the use of resources of concession which demonstrate, overtly, that the writers counter the expectation that they

have created for the reader and acknowledge alternative voices (Martin and Rose, 2003). This pattern — APPRECIATION plus concession — seems to construct more objective appraisers. In other words, those who do use attitude, but not the kind which construe exclusively emotion or moral values, and those who attempt to evoke affinity with the reader by opening up to alternative positions to their own.

If verbalization of AFFECT is limited to no more than a few examples in our data, and APPRECIATION is used to target the quota system, our participants appraise two sets of targets judgementally: a) socially constructed organisms, whose *modus operandi* may be subject to inspection, namely the Brazilian government and the Brazilian university system, and, b) human beings, as exemplified by the quota students themselves, while beneficiaries of the quota system, and as economically deprived individuals; in contrast to the ‘others’, namely, the rich, who resort to private education at primary level, but who migrate to public tertiary institutions at a later stage. In the first case, the notion of JUDGEMENT as applying to human behavior is stretched to include within it the “behavior” (or social practices) of different institutions, seen as social bodies.

Among the discussants’ more frequent targets is the university system in Brazil, both public and private. Universities are seen as a set of institutions whose norms are set by the Ministry of Education, but whose real parameters and aims are tacitly understood as meeting distinct (and unfair) social demands. Thus the university system is evaluated on ethical grounds, on different dimensions of JUDGEMENT. First, there is evoked JUDGEMENT on the dimension of Social Esteem: a pattern of linguistic markers of Usuality has been identified in the corpus, as in the following examples:

Example 17: *[a privately-owned university] opens at every corner.* [= em cada esquina tá abrindo....]

Example 18: *at every corner there is [a privately-owned university]; at every shopping center there is [a privately-owned university], get it?* (= a cada esquina tem uma, cada shopping tem uma, entendeu?)

Usuality in the examples above is conveyed through a consistent pattern of present time verb forms functioning as markers of durative or repeated action (in example 17) or habitual action (in example 18), often coupled with temporal adverbial markers. In [17], for example, the

locative prepositional phrase (*at every corner*) has temporal function in the sentence. The inclusive meaning of the expression (at every corner) takes on reiterative meaning – proof of this is the impossibility of its co-occurrence with another temporal expression with punctual meaning: * *A private university opened at every corner yesterday.*

The verbal pattern described has been understood as codifying Normality: the predominant social perception, in these students' discourse, is that the proliferation of private universities and the consequent expansion of the private university system in this country is being treated as “normal” events.

The evaluative dimension in this case relies on a standard of comparison which relates two elements of discourse: public sector universities and privately-owned universities. Although both elements of discourse are narrativized in the students' discourse (“*universidade pública*” e “*universidade particular*”), JUDGEMENT is evoked on account of the fact that the standard of reference, against which the “normal or usual” *modus operandi* of these two university school systems is measured, is never actually spelled out: public sector universities should address the needs of those who can not afford to pay for privately-owned universities.

Second, there is Inscribed JUDGEMENT on the dimension of Social Sanction, as in the example below:

Example 19 : *Public sector universities are elitist* [= As públicas são elitistas]

The expression of negative JUDGEMENT is explicit in the evaluative lexis. The use of an attributive adjective like *elitist* (which is generally predicated of animate beings, or personal agents) to qualify public sector universities is one more element to support our argument that institutions may be treated as social bodies, whose social practices may be evaluated as either ethical or un-ethical.

The dimension of JUDGEMENT here is, in Martin's terms (2000, p. 156) Propriety, related to the modal value of “obligation”. In the case of the public sector university system in Brazil, the relevant questions are: “how ethical is the public sector school system in Brazil”? “Whose needs should the public sector university school system in Brazil address?” More specifically, in terms of the example under discussion,

the question should be framed as: “how ethical is it for an institution to address exclusively the needs of upper social classes (the elite)?”

Another institution, seen as a social body, is the Government (itself or represented by the Ministry of Education). In the examples below, the type of negative JUDGEMENT used is Evoked and the aspect broached is that of Social Sanction, again expressed as Usuality.

Example 20: *(the government) has to help public sector students ...* [= (o governo tem que dar condições para os alunos de escolas públicas..)]

The government does not enable those students (quota students) to remain in public universities [=O governo não dá condições pra esses alunos (cotistas) se manterem nas faculdades públicas]

The item ‘government’ is particularly endowed with human characteristics – it is given a voice in the discussants’ discourse. ‘Government’ may indeed be coupled with reporting verbs in Portuguese as in *o governo/the government alega que/claims that or argumenta/argues*, followed by clauses. However, the discussants attribute a voice to the government by using direct speech immediately after the verb *diz/says*, suggesting what Longacre (1983) has termed a ‘peak’, a more vivid point in the discourseⁱⁱ. In an entire corpus made of editions of the newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo* throughout 1999, there are only four instances of ‘o governo diz’, and all four are followed by a reported structure. In the data derived from the focus group discussion, however, our participants attach some form of human consciousness, volition or intentionality to ‘government’. Their ‘government’ is capable of voicing opinions and giving excuses for not complying with what the quota students maintain is the government’s duty.

Examples 21: *(the government does not provide any support for either the primary or secondary level and then ‘it says: “no, I am doing something, at least if the quota student manages to enter university, I am providing them with something.* [=Ele (o governo) já não dá suporte nem no ensino fundamental nem no médio... e ai ele diz “não, eu estou fazendo, pelo menos, se ele (o cotista) quiser entrar, eu estou dando condições”]

Or

“As the government cannot afford to invest either in primary or secondary education, we are going to give the quota student a little push”. [= “Já que a gente (o governo) não tem condições de investir no ensino fundamental e no ensino médio, a gente vai tentar dar uma forcinha para ele (cotista).”]

These are the kinds of judgemental statements which are made throughout the focus group discussion. These are not circumscribed to any specific part of the interaction. However, there are other statements implying judgement which occur once the discussion is well under way. These are judgemental comments of a Social Esteem nature, targeting the appraisers themselves. These comments come in chunks, whose aim may be seen as what Eggins and Slade (op.cit.) have called ‘exemplums’, or, rather, explicit messages on how the world should or should not be. An illustrative comment in a typical fully-formed ‘Exemplum’ “represents the cultural significance of the events in the context of the culture in which the text is told” (Plum, 1988, cited in Eggins and Slade, 1997: 237). The examples below illustrate these:

Examples 22: *I come from a community prep course.* [= Eu vim de um pré-vestibular comunitário.]

It takes me almost two hours to get here... there are people who get into their car and get here in 5 minutes, get it? They shouldn't be here, they should be at xxxx [=Eu gasto quase duas horas da minha casa para cá... então tem gente que pega o carro e em cinco minutos ta em casa, entendeu? Não devia estar aqui, devia estar na (name of university).]

I did up to eighth grade in a private school. Then my mother couldn't afford it any longer. Then I took the exam (to a public sector school). When I took the exam, I was led to believe that I was going to go to a good school... [= Eu fiz ate a oitava serie em colégio particular, ai minha mãe não pôde mais pagar, ai eu fiz prova e quando fiz prova, eu fiz realmente iludida que ia entrar para um colégio bom....]

I finished secondary school ten years ago; soon afterwards, I took a prep course... my mum and dad had jobs then. [=Eu terminei o segundo grau dez anos atrás, logo assim que eu terminei o segundo grau, eu fiz um pré-vestibular...minha mãe e meu pai estavam trabalhando..]

While the examples above contain Evoked JUDGEMENT as to what the life of the destitute student may entail, the statements below contain Inscribed JUDGEMENT/SOCIAL ESTEEM. The pronoun used here is a general 'you' (você, a gente, used interchangeably) referring to 'any student'. The slot may also be filled with the noun groups 'the poor' (o pobre) or 'the student who attended public sector schools' (o aluno que estudou em escola pública)

Examples 23: *We spend two years without, I spent two months in the first year, without classes... you rush through the contents, you are taught only the minimum amount. You do not cover all the topics which you should normally cover at school.* [=A gente fica dois anos sem, fiquei dois meses no primeiro ano, sem ter aula...você vê a matéria corrida... você só da as principais quantidades das matérias. Você não tem a matéria toda que você deveria ter nos anos letivos.]

We are dealing with people who know more than we do. [=A gente está lidando com pessoas que têm uma bagagem maior...]

Who is it that attends a private university? It is the poor, the student who has come through public education; he is going to have to work to be able to afford it. [=Quem faz universidade particular/ É o pobre, o aluno que saiu da escola pública, vai trabalhar pra poder pagar]

A poor person does not have a good primary school, a good secondary, he doesn't know enough to let him pass the university entrance exam, because he doesn't have what it takes to attend a public university. [= O pobre não tem o fundamental, não tem o médio então ele já não tem uma base para o vestibular pra poder passar, porque ele não tem o mínimo de conhecimento pra uma faculdade publica]

The final target of JUDGEMENT is on the 'others', a group which includes the rich and the students who attend private schools. This social group is evaluated by the quota students in terms of Social Sanction. What the "rich" do is described as simply wrong. And, as the discussion progresses, Judgement is expressed not only in terms of whole clauses (what the rich do, i.e. they drive big cars) but also in the choice of lexis which is used as a substitute for the rich (i.e. molly-coddled rich kids, those who are loaded).

Examples 24: *The majority come from private schools or from an expensive fee-paying prep-course.* [= A maioria das pessoas vêm , vieram de uma escola particular ou ... de um pré-vestibular caro.]

Who attends public universities? It is the rich kids who study at private schools. [=Quem estuda na universidade pública? É o filhinho de papai que estudou em colégio particular.]

It is only the loaded who remain at this university. [=Só quem tem bala na agulha é que permanece aqui]

You have your mummy and your daddy who support you financially and so you needn't work. [= Você tem seu papai e sua mamãe que te banca e ai você não precisa trabalhar]

The cars they drive... those whose parents earn fat salaries. [= Os carros que eles andam ... aqueles que os pais ganham salários rechonchudos...]

Gentlemen's sons, who are filthy rich, are always here, driving their big cars. [= Os filhinhos de papai, que têm bala na agulha, ta sempre aqui, andando de carrão.]

Who owns this country nowadays? Those who have money. [=Quem manda no país hoje em dia? Quem tem dinheiro.]

These are a few of the many instances of Judgement present in the spoken corpus. While the written corpus does also present JUDGEMENT, these are no more than limited examples of Inscribed SOCIAL SANCTION. However, although there is a general consensus in appraising the quota system in terms of Appreciation, there are two dissenting voices (a male student of Mathematics and a female student of Law) who specifically accuse their professors of being either disinterested and money-minded or racist.

Example 25 a). *The quotas were well developed/organised, but these need to be matched by the authorities, specifically in terms of the teaching staff. So, please choose as faculty staff people who are proud of being teachers and of giving classes and not simply want their pay cheque at the end of the month. The support in terms of getting into the university was great, but what about afterwards, long-term?The need for financial support was partially met, but the teachers, those who do not*

always help, those contracted, who don't even explain the subjects adequately, they are instrumental in harming our performance. ..

[=as cotas foram bem elaboradas, só falta um acompanhamento das autoridades, principalmente da área docente. Por favor, contratem professores, pessoas que se orgulham em dar aula e não pessoas que só querem ver o dinheiro no final do mês. ...O apoio no ingresso foi ótimo mas e a continuidade? A necessidade de uma ajuda financeira de certa forma foi aliviada, mas os professores, esses nem sempre ajudavam, os contratados, que nem explicavam as matérias direito, prejudicando o rendimento.]

25b) No more than a few of the undergraduate courses, including Letters and Maths are supportive of the quota students. In other faculties, like Law, the question of quotas is treated in a discriminatory fashion, by lecturers and students alike, underlying the fact that Brazil is, truly, a racist country. Those who do support us are very few. [Apenas alguns cursos como Letras e Matemática estão apoiando os cotistas, enquanto que, em outras faculdades como Direito, o tema é tratado com discriminação por professores e alunos, ressaltando assim a verdade de que o Brasil é um país racista. São poucos os que nos apóiam.]

In 25 a, the Mathematics student demands better professionals by using Social Sanction statements. His demand is for professors who are proud to be in the teaching profession; his allegation, worded in terms of Social Esteem is that their lecturers are incompetent. In 25 b, the female law student's perception is that unlike Mathematics, in her own Law faculty, her professors are unwilling or unable to discuss the (racial) quota system, underlying the fact that Brazil is indeed a racist country. The lexis implying hostility resorted to in the oral corpus, however, is not used to package their dissent in writing.

5. Conclusions

The results suggest that the students' appraisal of affirmative action as a public policy conveys a positive attitude towards the quota system itself, but represents a mainly negative judgemental stance towards social bodies such as the government and the university and their social practices. In addition, whereas the quota students claim they do not feel any prejudice within the university environment, they show some evidence of a hostile attitude, verging on inverted prejudice, as they criticize their non-quota classmates, based on the latter's display of affluence.

Both methods of data collection seem to have provided the respondents with adequate space for voicing their opinions and provided the researchers with sufficient data for unveiling attitude. While the focus group elicits spontaneous responses and a wider variety of issues subject to appraisal, the short reports allow for reflection and fewer topics for evaluation. The constraints imposed by the genres produced and respondent bias may have influenced the results regarding the kinds of attitude more often foregrounded in each corpus. Because the participants in the focus group belong to the same social class and go through similar problems and difficulties, they might have felt more at ease to appraise both the government and the rich judgementally. The research subjects who produced the written reports, on the other hand, might have felt the need to sound more objective in their evaluations because they knew their texts were going to be analysed by researchers; therefore, they concentrated on the prompt that required them to assess the quota system adopted at UERJ and did so by resorting mostly to tokens of APPRECIATION.

In sum, the conclusions derived from the present research are twofold: certain are related to the main area of work of the researchers, i.e., the area of **textual studies**; other insights are related to the possible implications of the affirmative action pioneered at the State University of Rio de Janeiro.

In terms of textual studies, this paper has evaluated the Appraisal framework, as proposed by Martin, White and collaborators, and has claimed it to be effective when writer/speaker stance is at stake. The framework has proved particularly illuminating and delicate (in Functional terms) when dealing analytically with writer stances of a **similar nature**, which are verbalised in different manners. The paper has dwelled into the fine line separating APPRECIATION and JUDGEMENT, particularly when it comes to voicing attitude within an institutional setting. Martin & White's argument that tokens of APPRECIATION evoke JUDGEMENT has allowed researchers to claim that appraising the quota system necessarily translates as passing judgement on the Brazilian university school system as a whole: within the context of this research, APPRECIATION of the quota system cannot be dissociated from JUDGEMENT of the social body (or social bodies) regulating the relationships between academia and society.

In terms of research into what really goes on when attempts are made at integrating quota students into the flow of university life, it might be worth exploring the dissenting perspectives found in the answers

produced by the Law student and the Maths student regarding the competence and ethics of their professors. Equally, this dissention might reflect a chasm between quota and non quota students; however, this may well be confined to the more sought after faculties, including Law. A further study of attitude regarding the quota system might profit by separating clusters of opinion by faculty, e.g., using both types of data-collection instrument for collecting the reactions of participants representing quota and non-quota students, in addition to teaching staff, from a single faculty.

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ⁱ In Eggins and Slade (1997) Instantiation is appropriately called ‘appraising items’.