
Appraising Emotion and Identity Through Clairo's Lyrics Across *Immunity*, *Sling*, and *Charm* Albums

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Abstract

This study investigates how Clairo's lyrics across *Immunity* (2019), *Sling* (2021), and *Charm* (2024) albums construct emotion and identity using Appraisal Theory by Martin & White. By employing qualitative descriptive analysis, the research identifies Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation resources in nine representative songs selected from the three albums. The findings reveal a clear emotional progression: *Immunity* foregrounds sadness, vulnerability, and queer introspection; *Sling* reflects emotional fatigue, gendered frustration, and existential detachment; while *Charm* embraces playful desires, relational ambiguity, and emerging self-expression. These shifts demonstrate how Clairo's affective stance evolves, reflecting changes in self-perception, interpersonal positioning, and ideological voice. The discussion highlights how evaluative language in her lyrics ranges from affective metaphors to dialogic engagement, which constructs intimacy, resistance, and freedom. Appraisal Theory proves effective in capturing lyrical nuance, emotional texture, and the subtle interplay between personal and social meaning. Through her discursive strategies, Clairo articulates a maturing voice that negotiates identity, independence, and emotional complexity within the indie pop genre. This study contributes to the understanding of how linguistic frameworks can illuminate the emotional and ideological dimensions of contemporary music.

INTRODUCTION

During times of loneliness or joy, music frequently conveys what cannot be expressed through words alone. The tunes evoke feelings, while their words articulate the inexpressible. Music is a cultural creation that combines sound, language, and emotion to generate aesthetic and ideological impacts. Boris Asafyev, a Soviet musicologist, noted in a Rimas & Jr (2024) journal that music represents the art of intonation, organizing sound through pitch, time, timbre, intensity, and articulation. He further stressed that without expression, music remains an unresolved question seeking completion. Music serves not only as a source of entertainment but also as a means of communication that conveys values, identities, and emotional positions. In this context, song lyrics act as the linguistic element of musical dialogue. It is designed with writings that express emotional experiences, tell personal and social truths, and establish the artist's relationship with the audience. Lyrics are not just for decoration; they are crucial to how audiences perceive mood, message, and significance, particularly in genres that promote reflection and nuance.

Indie pop, a genre in the music world, is noted for its subtle production, personal tone, and intimate lyrics. Hesmondhalgh (1999) suggests that indie music is primarily recognized as a type of popular music created and spread beyond the large record label framework, frequently embodying ideas of artistic independence, authenticity, and opposition to commercial standards. A leading figure in the indie pop music scene who has embodied this style is Claire Cotrill, better recognized by her stage name Clairo. Rising from the bedroom-pop genre, she achieved recognition with her debut album, *Immunity* (2019), which explored themes of vulnerability, queer identity, and emotional instability through lo-fi sounds and gentle vocal presentation. Her second album, *Sling* (2021), signaled a change in style toward pastoral folk, drawing inspiration from Carole King and produced by Jack Antonoff, featuring lyrics that explore themes of domestic life, existential weariness, and introspection. Her newest project, *Charm* (2024), carries on this progression, featuring rich soft-rock compositions and lyrical topics of closeness, longing, and emotional uncertainty.

Appraisal Theory provides a nuanced linguistic framework based on Systemic Functional Linguistics for analyzing Clairo's lyrical discourse. Appraisal Theory investigates how language conveys assessment, feeling, and position (J.R Martin & White,

2005). It includes three subsystems of Attitude: Affect (emotional reaction), Judgment (moral assessment of actions), and Appreciation (aesthetic evaluation of items or events), along with Engagement (intertextual positioning and dialogic receptiveness) and Graduation (intensity scaling and emphasis). Appraisal Theory is especially effective for examining song lyrics as it facilitates systematic monitoring of how musicians convey emotional attitude, relational alignment, and ideological stance. Clairo's employment of emotional language, moral evaluation, and aesthetic recognition demonstrates complex negotiations of identity, longing, and autonomy. Utilizing Appraisal Theory, the nuanced changes in tone, intensity, and dialogic interaction that define her lyrical voice can be analyzed, providing an understanding of how she builds emotional closeness and social critique.

Many researchers have conducted research using Appraisal Theory. Putra, Aini, & Agustina (2024) investigated the type of Appraisal Attitude contained in a novel by Jessica Jung entitled "Shine," with the data consisting of 200 sentences collected. The results showed that the most dominant type of attitude appraisal in the novel was positive appraisal with 48 sentences (22.2%). Meanwhile, there were 44 sentences (21.7%) which were placed as positive affect, 42 sentences (20.3%) which were placed as negative affect, 31 sentences (13.8%) which were placed as negative appreciation, 11 sentences (10, 5%) which were classified as positive judgments, and 24 sentences (11.5%) which are positioned as negative judgments. Another research is from Iswara (2016), who explores the language used by the writer of the Great American Bathroom Book (GABB) Volume 1 in giving commentary towards Ernest Hemingway's novel entitled "A Farewell to Arms" on page 5-A2. Appraisal theory is used to investigate the evaluative language expressed by the writer in reviewing the novel and presenting his opinion on the novel under review. The findings show that the commentary mostly contains positive appreciation as it reviews the novel. Positive appreciation means that the writer evaluates the novel is good and worth reading. However, these previous studies did not discuss the use of Appraisal Theory in song lyrics. This study aims to give a deeper understanding and analyze the representation of how lyrics could express emotion and identity by applying Appraisal Theory.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Appraisal Theory

Appraisal theory provides a structure for analyzing how language embodies interpersonal meaning, position, and evaluation. According to J.R. Martin & White (2005), appraisal theory focuses on the interpersonal semantics of evaluative positioning, detailing how speakers express approval and disapproval, support and condemnation, applaud and critique. The theory is organized into three subsystems: Attitude, which includes affect, judgment, and appreciation; Engagement, which involves dialogic positioning and acknowledging alternative voices; and Graduation, which assesses the intensity or degree of evaluations. These classifications allow analysts to track how texts shape social relationships and ideological stances. Appraisal offers the tools for negotiating feelings, assessments, and valuations, as well as resources for enhancing and interacting with these evaluations, making it particularly effective for examining media, literature, and public texts.

Attitude

In Appraisal Theory, J.R. Martin & White (2005) describe attitude as the language tools utilized to convey emotions, judge actions, and value objects or events. It is categorized into three areas: Affect (emotional reactions, e.g., “joyful,” “frustrated”), Judgment (moral or ethical assessments of behavior, e.g., “trustworthy,” “negligent”), and Appreciation (aesthetic or value judgments of items or processes, e.g., “beautiful,” “efficient”). Attitude plays a key role in grasping how texts place readers and create interpersonal meaning.

Engagement

Engagement refers to the linguistic strategies by which speakers or writers position themselves in relation to other voices, viewpoints, or potential responses. It captures how texts manage dialogic space, whether they open it up to alternative perspectives (heteroglossic) or close it down to assert a singular stance (monoglossic). Engagement deals with the sourcing of attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse, allowing analysts to trace how authors align with, resist, or negotiate other positions (J.R. Martin & White, 2005, p. 36). This subsystem is crucial for understanding how texts construct authority, solidarity, and ideological alignment, especially in media and public discourse.

Graduation

Graduation in Appraisal Theory deals with grading phenomena, where feelings are amplified and categories are blurred, allowing texts to modulate emotional impact and ideological clarity. It is also used to amplify or soften evaluative meanings, which essentially is how speakers or writers adjust the intensity or focus of their attitudes. Graduation operates through two main mechanisms: Force, which scales intensity (e.g., “very happy,” “slightly disappointed”), and Focus, which sharpens or blurs category boundaries (e.g., “a true hero” vs. “kind of a hero”). It is essential to analyze how evaluations are made more emphatic, tentative, or strategically vague, particularly in persuasive or emotionally charged discourse.

Previous Study

The researcher has compiled several previous studies related to the use of Appraisal Theory. The first research was conducted by Affandy & Widayiswara (2024), entitled “Analysis of Appraisal System in News Text ‘*Mendikbud Minta Kurikulum Pendidikan Calon Guru Agama Dievaluasi*’ ”, which investigated news items on the Kompas.com site related to radicalism and intolerance in education by teacher religion evaluation using Appraisal Theory that focuses on negotiating social relations about one's assessment of something. The results study show that the appraisal includes projecting source, attitude, graduation, and heterogloss, and that the interpersonal meaning concerns in graduation focus, which imply force intensifier and focus sharpener. However, the study is limited by its narrow data scope and the analysis relies heavily on interpretation without statistical support.

Second, a research entitled “The Characterization of Topeng Panji Cirebon Through Judgment Evaluation At Topeng Gegesik Book in Indonesian Version (Appraisal Theory)” was conducted by Iswandi, Firdaus, & Widayasari (2025) reveals how the author predominantly employs positive normality and positive propriety that the author was portraying *Topeng Panji Cirebon* positively and respectfully with social norms and moral values by focusing on analyzing the types of judgment evaluation that are represented in the source language text (Indonesian version). Nevertheless, the study is only focusing on one subsystem (judgment) and lacks engagement with broader appraisal dimensions like engagement or graduation.

Another research conducted by Widayiswara, Nurman, Fatmawaty, & Falakhah

(2024) with the title “A Language Appraisal on Kompas.com News Through Interpersonal Lens” which analyzes three news items on the Kompas.com site related to the installation of Puan Maharani's billboards installed around the Mount Semeru evacuation by applying the Appraisal Theory. As a result, from the three news reports, a negative assessment was found from the public because they discussed morality and the normality of Puan's billboards at Mount Semeru refuge. Many thought that Puan wanted to increase her popularity and electability for the 2024 general election by taking advantage of the disaster situation. However, its scope is limited to only three news items and excludes other appraisal subsystems. It also lacks comparative analysis with interviews or broader media sources, which reduces its depth and generalizability.

Finally, research entitled “Attitude Perspective in BBC News’ Article: An Appraisal Analysis” was done by Prastikawati (2021) in which the study presents the appraisal analysis through the system of meaning (attitude) in an article taken from BBC News. A discourse analysis was applied by evaluating the meaning behind the discourse towards an attitudinal perspective to figure out the feelings behind the discourse. The findings revealed that the effect of unhappiness was the most controlling attitude subsystems utilized and used in the BBC News’ article to convey the feelings of people and phenomena/events presented in the BBC News’ article, and then followed by the realization of other attitude subsystems: judgment and appreciation. Nevertheless, the scope is limited to a single news article and does not explore engagement and graduation subsystems.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive approach focusing on words and meanings. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, as well as focusing on understanding human experiences, social phenomena, and cultural meanings through non-numeric data. The method was textual analysis, where the researcher studied nine selected songs from Clairo’s albums *Immunity*, *Sling*, and *Charm*. The songs were chosen based on their emotional depth and relevance to identify themes.

The main tool used was lyric analysis, guided by Appraisal Theory. To make sure the analysis was valid and consistent, the researcher followed clear definitions from

Martin & White and checked results through repeated coding. The research steps include reviewing related theories, selecting songs through Spotify, transcribing lyrics, identifying Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation elements in each song, and then interpreting the meaning. The data was then grouped and compared to see how Clairo's emotional and ideological voice changed across albums within different years.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Datum 1

This section presents the appraisal resources identified through the lyrics of "Alewife," "Bags," and "Sofia," from the album *Immunity*.

Attitude: Emotional Vulnerability and Interpersonal Evaluation

In "Alewife," the track focuses on grief and thankfulness, featuring lines like "Swear I could've done it / If you weren't there when I hit the floor" that convey deep distress and significant emotional urgency. In phrases like "You saved me" and "You called me seven times," Clairo assesses her friend favorably, depicting her as a moral rescuer through evaluation. In the song "Bags," Clairo examines confined longing and internalized apprehension. Affect is subdued and contradictory: "Can you see me using everything to hold back" indicates emotional stress, while "Know you'd make fun of me" suggests expected humiliation. Judgment is predominantly self-critical and negative, as the speaker perceives herself as excessively emotional or inappropriate ("I should probably keep it all to myself", "I don't wanna be forward).

From "Sofia," the artist presents an explicit romantic declaration. Phrases such as "Oh my God, I think I'm in love with you" and "I love you with your hair down" convey clear feelings of love and admiration. Clairo's longing is now revealed rather than hidden, signifying a move towards emotional transparency. Nevertheless, "Shouldn't feel like a crime" suggests a subtle moral conflict, implying the societal illegitimacy of same-gender attraction, representing an unspoken negative social sanction that contrasts with the speaker's internal affirmation. Appreciation resources are metaphorical and sensory in "Bags" ("Sugar coated melting in your mouth"), spatial and temporal in "Alewife" ("Only 30 minutes from Alewife"), and aesthetic in "Sofia" ("How I love you with your hair down", "we can drive around"), shaping intimacy and emotional geography.

Engagement: Dialogic Positioning and Interpersonal Address

Engagement resources vary across the three songs. "Alewife" uses phrases like

“You know you saved me” and “You called me seven times” to invoke shared memory and mutual understanding, positioning the listener as emotionally present. “Bags” use interrogatives (“Can you figure me out?”, “Can you see me?”) to invite interpretation and emotional reciprocity. The mention of “Mitchell told me I should be just fine” introduces an external voice, layering the speaker’s internal monologue with outside reassurance.

While “Alewife” and “Bags” are primarily monoglossic with a few heteroglossic engagement resources emerging in both songs, “Sofia” is more dialogically expansive. It directly addresses the addressee (“Sofia, know that you and I...”, “You know I’ll do anything...”), creating a shared emotional space. The repeated use of “you” and “we” constructs a relational frame, inviting the listener into a mutual fantasy of love and possibility. This contrasts with “Alewife’s” retrospective gratitude and “Bags” tentative questioning. “Sofia” is forward-facing, hopeful, and emotionally available.

Graduation: Intensification and Softening of Emotional Stakes

Graduation resources modulate emotional intensity across the songs. “Alewife” employs high-force modality (“*Swear I could’ve done it*”) and numerical repetition (“*You called me seven times*”) to dramatize emotional urgency. The speaker’s despair is intensified through repetition and temporal compression (“*Every second counts*”) in “Bags.” It also uses metaphorical graduation (“*Sugar coated melting*”, “*Spill it open, let it rush to my head*”) to aestheticize emotional overwhelm. Softening strategies (“*I guess this could be worse*”, “*Pardon my emotions*”) mitigate vulnerability, reflecting the speaker’s cautious negotiation of desire.

“Sofia” amplifies romantic intensity through exclamative force (“*Oh my God, I think I’m in love with you*”) and temporal commitment (“*I’ll be here ‘til the end of time*”). The line “*I don’t want it to fade*” signals fear of loss, intensifying the stakes of emotional investment. Unlike *Bags*, which softens vulnerability, “Sofia” leans into emotional clarity and desire, though still tempered by uncertainty (“*There’s things that I know could get in the way*”).

Table 1. Comparative Summary of Appraisal System in *Immunity* Album

Appraisal System	<i>Alewife</i>	<i>Bags</i>	<i>Sofia</i>
Affect	Despair, gratitude	Hesitation, longing	Romantic joy, hope, subtle fear
Judgment	Positive (friend), ambiguous (self)	Negative (self), ambiguous (addressee)	Positive (self and addressee), with social tension
Appreciation	Emotional serendipity	Sensory metaphor, temporal intensity	Aesthetic intimacy, emotional devotion

Engagement	Shared memory, direct address	Questions, external voice (Mitchell)	Direct address, Shared fantasy, inclusive “we”
Graduation	High-force modality, repetition	Metaphor, softening, intensification	Emotional surge, temporal commitment, fear of fading

Datum 2

This section presents the appraisal resources identified through the lyrics of “Amoeba,” “Blouse,” and “Just for Today,” from the album *Sling*.

Attitude: Emotional Fatigue, Gendered Disillusionment and Self-Reflection

Across all three songs, Clairo foregrounds an affective stance marked by emotional exhaustion and introspection. In “Amoeba,” the speaker expresses detachment and social withdrawal (“*I show up to the party just to leave*”), while “Just for Today” reveals deeper vulnerability and mental health struggle (“*Mommy, I’m afraid I’ve been talking to the hotline again*”). These lyrics reflect a lowered impact, where emotions are present but often numbed or ironic. Blouse presents a layered affective stance. The speaker expresses emotional invisibility and disappointment (“*Why do I tell you how I feel / When you’re just looking down the blouse?*”), internalized shame (“*It’s funny now, I’m just useless and a whore*”), and longing for connection (“*If touch could make them hear, then touch me now*”). These lines reflect emotional exposure met with dismissal, creating a tone of quiet devastation.

Judgment is largely self-directed and uncertain. In “Blouse,” the speaker critiques herself harshly (“*It’s funny now, I’m just useless and a whore*”) while also exposing the objectifying gaze of others (“*Why do I tell you how I feel / When you’re just looking down the blouse?*”). “Amoeba” and “Just for Today” similarly evaluate the self as distant, tired, or emotionally unavailable, suggesting a survival strategy rather than self-celebration. Appreciation appears through metaphorical and sensory imagery. “Blouse” aestheticizes domestic intimacy (“*Quiet at your kitchen table*”), while “Amoeba” employs surreal metaphors (“*A pool to shed your memory*”) to elevate emotional breakdown. “Just for Today” blends poetic and existential imagery (“*Meet devils for tea*”, “*Throw my drink into the faces of my demise*”), turning mental health struggle into a symbolic experience.

Engagement: Internal Monologue, Implied Dialogue, and Social Critique

Engagement resources across these songs are primarily monoglossic, presenting the speaker’s internal voice. However, each song includes moments of heteroglossic engagement that open the speaker’s reflections to imagined or implied others.

In “Amoeba,” rhetorical questions (“*Could you say you even tried?*”) and sarcastic address (“*Aren’t you glad that you reside in a Hell and in disguise?*”) suggest a critique of social norms and emotional detachment. The reference to “*echo chambers inside a neighborhood*” implies collective behavior and independent thoughts, expanding the engagement beyond the self to include societal structures. “Blouse” addresses an emotionally absent listener (“*Why do I tell you how I feel...*”) and invokes a broader audience through the line “*if touch could make them heal, then touch me now*”, expressing a desire to be understood by others who remain emotionally distant. “Just for Today” includes a direct address to a maternal figure (“*Mommy, I’m afraid...*”) and projects future relational tension (“*At thirty, your honey’s gonna ask you...*”), creating feelings of connection and imagined dialogue. These shifts reinforce the theme of emotional invisibility and the longing for connection.

Graduation: Modulating Emotional Intensity and Symbolic Force

Graduation resources are used to modulate emotional stakes and sharpen critique. “Amoeba” downscales social engagement (“*Keep it under wraps*”) while intensifying moral critique (“*A Hell and in disguise*”). “Blouse” uses high-force graduation to express emotional pain (“*Touch me now*”, “*Cosign from your favorite one-man show*”), while “Just for Today” blends forceful metaphors (“*Throw my drink into the faces of my demise*”) with softening strategies (“*I won’t be worrying anyone on tour*”). These resources allow Clairo to balance despair with subtle resistance and poetic detachment.

Table 2. Comparative Summary of Appraisal System in *Sling* Album

Appraisal System	<i>Amoeba</i>	<i>Blouse</i>	<i>Just for Today</i>
Affect	Emotional detachment, quiet envy	Vulnerability, frustration, resignation	Fear, fatigue, quiet defiance
Judgment	Self-critique, social disillusionment	Harsh self-evaluation, critique of objectification	Ambiguous self-assessment, projected judgment
Appreciation	Surreal metaphors, emotional breakdown	Domestic intimacy, symbolic critique	Poetic imagery, existential reflection
Engagement	Rhetorical address, social critique, implied listener	Direct address, imagined audience	Maternal invocation, future dialogue
Graduation	Downscaling, metaphorical sharpness	High-force critique, sensory focus	Forceful metaphor, emotional softening

Datum 3

This section presents the appraisal resources identified through the lyrics of “Echo,” “Sexy to Someone,” and “Slow Dance,” from the album *Charm*.

Attitude: Desire, Ambiguity, and Emotional Texture

Across these three songs, Clairo foregrounds an affective stance through expressions of longing, uncertainty, and sensuality. In “Echo,” the speaker expresses emotional dependence and quiet tension (“*There is something that I need from you*”, “*Would you hear your name echo?*”), suggesting intimacy that feels unresolved. “Sexy to Someone” centers on playful desire and self-worth, with lines such as “*Sexy to someone is all I really want*” and “*It’s just a little thing I can’t live without*” revealing emotional need and performative longing. “Slow Dance” shifts toward relational vulnerability and emotional confusion (“*What is it that’s keeping you alone?*”, “*It can’t be over*”), reflecting a speaker caught between intimacy and distance.

Judgment is subtle and relational. In “Echo,” the speaker admires the addressee’s emotional perceptiveness (“*You’re the only one that knows*”) while questioning why their love was not growing (“*Our love goes nowhere*”). “Sexy to Someone” includes self-evaluation through references to rejection (“*Didn’t get the part*”, “*Didn’t get the job*”), suggesting a desire for external affirmation. “Slow Dance” gently critiques emotional hesitation (“*One foot out and the other crawling in bed*”), framing relational ambiguity without blame.

Appreciation appears through metaphorical and sensory imagery. “Echo” uses emotional mirroring (“*What you notice I echo*”) and repetition to aestheticize intimacy. “Sexy to Someone” blends sensual metaphors (“*Honey stickin’ to your hands, sugar on the rim*”) with everyday scenes (“*Walking through the park*”, “*moments at a bar*”), turning everyday situations into intensely emotional ones. “Slow Dance” uses symbolic imagery (“*Candles burn out*”, “*record is faded down*”, “*moon begins to hide*”) to frame emotional fading and memory.

Engagement: Dialogic Play and Emotional Address

Engagement resources across these songs are mostly heteroglossic, reflecting a shift from internal monologue to dialogic play. In “Echo,” the speaker directly addresses the addressee (“*There is something that I need from you*”, “*I think you already know*”), creating a sense of emotional immediacy. “Sexy to Someone” simulates internal dialogue through

rhetorical questions (*"Is it too much to ask?"*, *"Then what's holding you back?"*), while also referencing external voices (*"Ask if I'm in a movie..."*), suggesting social scripts and imagined responses. "Slow Dance" uses direct questions (*"What is it that's keeping you alone?"*) and relational address (*"I know you've got people to turn to"*) to build emotional exploration and shared reflection. These engagement strategies construct intimacy, tension, and emotional negotiation, reflecting Clairo's evolving comfort with relational complexity.

Graduation: Emotional Modulation and Symbolic Intensity

Graduation resources modulate emotional intensity and sharpen symbolic focus. "Echo" uses repetition (*"Echo"*) and emotional contradiction (*"Our love is meant to be shared / While our love goes nowhere"*) to heighten relational stakes. "Sexy to Someone" intensifies emotional need through repeated declarations (*"I want to be sexy to someone"*) and sensory metaphor. "Slow Dance" uses repeated assertions (*"It's not over"*, *"It can't be over"*) and symbolic imagery (*"moon"*, *"candles"*, *"record"*) to dramatize emotional fading and resistance.

Table 3. Comparative Summary of Appraisal System in *Charm* Album

Appraisal System	<i>Echo</i>	<i>Sexy to Someone</i>	<i>Slow Dance</i>
Affect	Longing, emotional tension	Desire, insecurity, playful need	Vulnerability, confusion, nostalgia
Judgment	Admiration, relational critique	Self-evaluation, social rejection	Gentle critique of emotional hesitation
Appreciation	Emotional mirroring, repetition	Sensory metaphor, aestheticized scenes	Symbolic fading, relational memory
Engagement	Direct address, shared understanding	Rhetorical questions, imagined dialogue	Relational exploration, emotional address
Graduation	Repetition, emotional contradiction	Rising urgency, sensory focus	Symbolic imagery, repeated assertions

The appraisal analysis across Clairo's three albums reveals a clear emotional and discursive evolution when examined through their representative songs. In *Immunity*, Clairo sings about deep sadness, fear, and quiet love, often related to queer feelings that feel risky or hidden. In *Sling*, her lyrics become quieter and tired, showing how she feels overwhelmed by life and disconnected from others. In contrast, through *Charm*, Clairo sounds more playful and confident since she sings about flirting, desire, and emotional freedom, even if things still feel uncertain. These changes show how her emotions and identity grow over time as she matures, moving from pain and confusion to reflection and

then to expressing herself and joy.

CONCLUSION(S)

Clairo's lyrical evolution throughout *Immunity*, *Sling*, and *Charm* reveals how evaluative language can trace emotional maturation, identity negotiation, and ideological nuance within the indie pop discourse. By applying Appraisal Theory, this study demonstrates how affect, judgment, appreciation, engagement, and graduation interact to construct intimacy, resistance, and self-expression. The findings suggest that lyrical analysis offers fertile ground for exploring how artists linguistically navigate gender, queerness, and emotional labor. Future research could expand this scope by integrating multimodal analysis by examining how visual aesthetics, vocal delivery, and production choices reinforce or complicate appraisal patterns, thus enriching the understanding of meaning-making in contemporary music.

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