

Evaluative Language in High-Stakes Public Speaking: A Corpus Analysis of Miss Universe Q&A Sessions

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Article information	Abstract
DOI : 10.25077/jds.2.1.29-40.2025 Correspondence : vtlhuong@hueuni.edu.vn	This paper is part of a broader research project examining evaluative language in the high-stakes public speaking context of the Miss Universe (MU) pageant, contributing to our understanding of spontaneous speech patterns. It investigates the evaluative language patterns employed by MU candidates during the Q&A sessions, utilizing Appraisal Theory as a framework for analysis. The primary aim was to uncover the common patterns of evaluative language used by the candidates during such pivotal moments. Data were collected from MU Q&A sessions between 2000 and 2023, focusing on English-speaking candidates' responses. Using Sketch Engine for corpus analysis, collocations and language patterns were extracted from 100 responses to analyze key linguistic elements. The results show a strong tendency toward positive evaluative language, particularly emphasizing themes of empowerment, inclusivity, and advocacy. These linguistic patterns reflect how candidates strategically employ language to project confidence, align with the ethos of the competition, and engage with global issues. Through their responses, candidates effectively use language to construct positive self-images and advocate for social change. These findings advance both theoretical and practical insights into the role of evaluative language in public speaking, offering implications for discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, and language use in media and performance contexts.
Submission Track Submission : September 11, 2024 Final Review : November 12, 2024 Accepted : November 14, 2024 Available online : November 16, 2024	
Keywords Evaluative language, Appraisal Theory, Miss Universe, Q&A sessions, beauty pageants, corpus analysis	

INTRODUCTION

Evaluative language has a critical role to play in contexts of persuasion and influence. Amidst the ever-expanding landscape of beauty pageants, particularly the Miss Universe (MU) competition, the use of evaluative language is of paramount importance during the final Q&A sessions. Here, within time constraints, candidates must come up with impromptu responses that demonstrate not only their intelligence but also their stance on various societal issues. Their language is a dominant assessment in MU (Padmarintan & Roselani, 2024). Therefore, Q&A sessions are truly a defining moment, as MU candidates must answer thought-provoking questions while under immense pressure. These moments offer a unique opportunity to examine how language is used to express evaluative attitudes. Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), a framework for understanding the expression of attitudes, emotions, and judgments, provides a robust lens for analyzing the evaluative language employed by the candidates. By focusing on the patterns of attitude, particularly affect, judgment, and appreciation, this study seeks to identify the predominant patterns of evaluative language employed by MU candidates during their Q&A sessions and discuss how these patterns align with the broader goals of the MU competition, including empowerment, inclusivity, and advocacy.

Extensive research has explored evaluative language predominantly in media (e.g., Asad et al., 2021; Fadhillah, 2021; Jing & Lihuan, 2021; Prastikawati, 2021; Cahyono et al., 2021; Puspita & Pranoto, 2021; Luo et al., 2022; Komninos, 2023; Yuliyanti, 2023), politics (e.g., Lian, 2018; Putri, 2019; Naghia & Cahyono, 2021; Aljuraywi & Alyousef, 2022; Goudong & Afzaal, 2023), and other domains (e.g., Gallardo & Ferrari, 2010; Behnam & Bahar, 2013; Li, 2016; Ataei, 2019; Magfiroh et al., 2021; Li, 2021); however,

little attention has been paid to its application in spontaneous, unscripted, and high-stakes settings like beauty pageants, especially MU. Studies, such as those by Padmarintan & Roselani (2024), have analyzed grammatical and lexical elements in MU winning answers from 2018 to 2023, identifying discourse patterns shaped by societal events. However, their research has focused on textual analysis with limited exploration of evaluative language beyond surface elements like references, conjunctions, and ellipses. Moreover, the study's narrow focus on winning answers from a specific period potentially overlooks broader trends in discourse across multiple candidates and competitions. Similarly, Hermawan, Ronda, & Sigit (2023) examined the multimodal aspects of MU discourse, particularly in relation to how beauty standards and self-identity are constructed through gestures and other non-verbal cues. Their analysis, while comprehensive in terms of visual communication, did not delve deeply into the specific linguistic strategies used by candidates during their Q&A performances, especially those related to evaluative language. As a result, the study leaves a gap in understanding how language, as opposed to gestures, functions as a tool for persuasion and social influence in these competitions. Sari (2024) further contributes to the body of literature by focusing on how advertisements linked to MU candidates construct beauty standards through both verbal and visual elements. While this work highlights the complex interplay between different communicative modes, it does not address the live, spontaneous discourse present in Q&A sessions, which are central to this study. By concentrating on a multimodal advertisement, it limits its scope to pre-constructed messages, missing the dynamic, in-the-moment evaluations present in the competition.

Given the limitations of existing literature, there remains a significant gap in the systematic analysis of evaluative language used during the spontaneous, high-pressure Q&A sessions in MU. Most studies fail to capture the real-time evaluative language of attitude candidates make as they respond to challenging questions. This is where the present study aims to contribute. The primary objective of this study is to identify and analyze the patterns of evaluative language, focusing on affect, judgment, and appreciation, as used by MU candidates during the final Q&A sessions. By doing so, the study aims to uncover how these language patterns reflect the candidates' attempts to convey values such as empowerment, aspiration, and advocacy, all of which align with the broader objectives of the MU competition.

METHODS

Study Design

This study employed a corpus-based analytical approach, with Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) serving as the theoretical framework, specifically focusing on the attitude domain. The attitude domain includes three main categories: affect (emotions), judgment (evaluations of behavior), and appreciation (evaluations of things and phenomena)

The corpus analysis was conducted using Sketch Engine, where the focus was on identifying the collocations and linguistic patterns associated with the attitude categories. The most frequent evaluative words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs) were extracted and analyzed. The use of LogDice scores further assisted in quantifying the strength of collocations related to evaluative attitudes. The research focused on analyzing evaluative language in the MU competition Q&A sessions between 2000 and 2023, with a focus on spontaneous responses delivered in English.

Sample

The sample consisted of 100 Q&A responses from MU candidates between 2000 and 2023. The candidates were selected based on the availability of English-language responses during the final Q&A sessions. The primary selection criterion was the use of English as the spoken language in order to maintain linguistic consistency in the analysis. All responses were publicly available and retrieved from the official MU YouTube channel and other archival resources.

Instruments

The primary tool used in this research was Sketch Engine, an advanced corpus analysis platform designed for linguistic investigation. It allowed for both qualitative and quantitative exploration of the evaluative language employed by MU candidates during the final Q&A sessions.

The LogDice score (Rychlý, 2008) was employed to assess the strength of collocational relationships between word pairs within the corpus. The LogDice score is a modified version of the Dice score and is commonly used to evaluate word associations based on their co-occurrence patterns. It offers practical benefits such as a theoretical maximum value of 14, independence from corpus size, and reliability across various linguistic datasets. This stability makes the LogDice score an efficient metric for examining evaluative language collocations in different sub-corpora.

Procedures

Firstly, unannotated transcripts from the MU competition Q&A sessions were uploaded into Sketch Engine, forming a corpus of 6,121 words. Secondly, using Sketch Engine's analytical features, lists of the most frequently used nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs were extracted. The analysis focused on identifying the top five evaluative words in each category, except for adverbs, where only three were selected due to lower frequency. Finally, the Word Sketch function in Sketch Engine was utilized to examine the collocations of the selected evaluative words. This function provided insight into word clusters, collocations, and linguistic patterns based on their LogDice scores. The analysis included examining the strength of these collocations to understand how candidates utilized evaluative language during the Q&A sessions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the LogDice score to quantify the strength of collocations between evaluative language elements. The statistical analysis focused on evaluating the frequency of key evaluative words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs) and their collocational partners. The analysis also involved identifying recurring linguistic patterns and themes in the responses, which were then examined for broader social and communicative strategies. This method allowed for both quantitative and qualitative insights into the candidates' use of evaluative language in a high-stakes public setting.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the data set with insights into the collocations of specific evaluative words used in the candidates' responses and the corresponding LogDice score. Where possible, most of the information has also been tabulated for a hands-on management.

Evaluative nouns

The most frequent nouns found in the data set include *beauty*, *voice*, *dream*, *opportunity*, and *power*. The collocations of these lexical items will be presented in Tables 1 to 5.

Table 1. Collocation with “beauty”

Collocations with “Beauty”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Nouns	pageant	<i>beauty pageants</i>	13.2
	queen	<i>beauty queens</i>	13.0
	inner	<i>inner beauty</i>	13.2
Adjectives	external	<i>external beauty</i>	12.7
	true	<i>true beauty</i>	12.4
	find	<i>find beauty on the outside</i>	12.8
Verbs	reflect	<i>reflect our true beauty</i>	12.2
	cultivate	<i>cultivate our inner beauty</i>	12.2
Pronominal possessors	our	<i>our inner beauty</i>	10.9

Table 1 provides detailed information about the noun “beauty” and its collocations in the evaluative language used by the candidates. The highest LogDice scores are observed with nouns related to

competitions and titles, such as “beauty pageants” (13.2) and “beauty queens” (13.0). Additionally, candidates frequently mention different dimensions of beauty, including “inner beauty” (13.2), “external beauty” (12.7), and “true beauty” (12.4). This suggests a nuanced discussion that values both internal qualities and physical appearance. Moreover, the verbs collocated with beauty, such as “find” (12.8), “reflect” (12.2), and “cultivate” (12.2), are signals of an active engagement with the concept of beauty. As candidates often speak about recognizing, reflecting on, and nurturing beauty, there exists a dynamic process of understanding and enhancing it. Lastly, the pronominal possessor “our” (10.9) used in phrases like “our inner beauty” suggests a personal and communal connection to beauty, framing it within a collective and inclusive context.

Table 2. Collocation with “voice”

Collocations with “Voice”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Verbs	echo	<i>let your voice echo</i>	14.0
	raise	<i>let’s raise our voice</i>	13.1
	use	<i>use our voice to stand up for what is right</i>	12.4
	silence	<i>don’t ever, ever let anyone silence your voice</i>	11.2
	find	<i>find a voice</i>	11.0
	be	<i>we are the voice of tomorrow</i>	9.1
Pronominal possessors	our	<i>when we use our voice</i>	12.2
	your	<i>don’t ever, ever let anyone silence your voice</i>	10.3
	my	<i>I will use my voice</i>	8.9

Table 2 presents the collocations of the noun “voice” in the evaluative language used by the candidates. The highest LogDice scores are associated with verbs that emphasize the projection and utilization of one’s voice. For instance, “echo” (14.0), “raise” (13.1), and “use” (12.4) suggest a strong emphasis on vocal expression and advocacy. These verbs imply that candidates frequently discuss the importance of making one’s voice heard and using it as a tool for standing up for rights and echoing important messages. Furthermore, the verb “silence” (11.2) in the context of “don’t ever, ever let anyone silence your voice” indicates a common theme of resisting suppression and maintaining one’s voice against opposition. This aligns with the verb “find” (LogDice: 11.0), as in “find a voice”, emphasizing the journey of discovering and asserting one’s voice. Additionally, the expression “we are the voice of tomorrow” (9.1) suggests a collective identification with the future and the ongoing impact of their voices.

The pronominal possessors “our” (12.2), “your” (10.3), and “my” (8.9) further personalize and universalize the concept of voice. Candidates use these possessors to emphasize both individual and collective ownership of vocal expression, inclined to the shared responsibility and empowerment in using one’s voice.

Table 3. Collocation with “dream”

Collocations with “Dream”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Nouns	reality	<i>make our dreams reality</i>	14.0
	passion	<i>following our dreams, our passions</i>	13.4
	power	<i>I believe in the dream and the power that we all hold</i>	13.4
Adjectives	forbidden	<i>that forbidden dream that I had</i>	13.7
	wild	<i>follow their wildest dreams</i>	13.0
	follow	<i>following our dreams</i>	12.8
Verbs	live	<i>I am living my dreams</i>	12.7
	make	<i>making my dream come true</i>	10.7
	come	<i>making my dream come true</i>	13.0
	my	<i>I went for my dream</i>	11.0
Pronominal possessors	your	<i>believe in your dream</i>	10.5
	their	<i>follow their wildest dreams</i>	10.4
	our	<i>following our dreams, our passions</i>	9.2

Table 3 illustrates the collocations of the noun “dream” in the evaluative language used by the candidates. High LogDice scores are evident with several nouns and verbs that emphasize the realization and pursuit of dreams. The noun “reality” (14.0) is frequently collocated with “dream”, indicating a strong focus on

making dreams come true. Similarly, “passion” and “power” (both 13.4) are often linked with “dream”, associated with the intrinsic motivation and belief in personal capability that drive the pursuit of dreams.

Adjectives such as “forbidden” (13.7) and “wild” (13.0) suggest a thematic exploration of dreams that are unconventional or aspirational. These adjectives reflect the candidates’ narratives about aiming for goals that might seem unattainable or extraordinary. Key verbs like “follow” (12.8), “live” (12.7), and “make” (10.7) emphasize the active pursuit and realization of dreams. For example, expressions like “following our dreams” and “I am living my dreams” indicate a proactive approach towards achieving aspirations. The verb “come” (13.0) in “making my dream come true” reinforces the idea of turning dreams into reality.

Pronominal possessors “my” (11.0), “your” (10.5), “their” (10.4), and “our” (9.2) highlight the personal and collective ownership of dreams. Candidates use these possessors to convey a sense of personal journey as well as shared aspirations, attaching importance to dreams of both individual and collective identities.

Table 4. Collocation with “opportunity”

Collocations with “Opportunity”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Adjectives	equal	<i>equal opportunities</i>	13.0
	need	<i>these persons need opportunities</i>	11.8
Verbs	give	<i>we should be given every opportunity</i>	11.5
	have	<i>if I have the opportunity</i>	10.9
	use	<i>I would use that opportunity to</i>	10.8

Table 4 presents the collocations of the noun “opportunity” in the evaluative language of the candidates. The highest LogDice score in this figure is associated with the adjective “equal” (13.0), reflecting a strong emphasis on the notion of equal opportunities. This suggests that the candidates frequently discuss the importance of providing equal chances to all individuals.

Among the verbs, “need” (11.8) is highly collocated with “opportunity”, indicating that there is a recurring focus on the necessity for opportunities, particularly for those who might be disadvantaged or in need of a chance to succeed. “Give” (11.5) follows closely, underscoring the candidates’ discussions about the significance of providing opportunities.

The verbs “have” (10.9) and “use” (10.8) are also significant collocates, suggesting a focus on the personal agency and proactive utilization of opportunities. Phrases like “if I have the opportunity” and “I would use that opportunity to” reflect the candidates’ emphasis on making the most of given chances and the potential for personal growth and achievement.

Table 5. Collocation with “power”

Collocations with “Power”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Verbs	take	<i>so please, take your power</i>	11.1
	use	<i>when we use our voice and we use our power to</i>	10.9
	have	<i>we have the power to</i>	10.4
	be	<i>this is the power that we have</i>	8.2
Pronominal possessors	your	<i>so please, take your power</i>	10.8
	our	<i>when we use our voice and we use our power</i>	9.4

Table 5 illustrates the collocations of the noun “power” in the candidates’ evaluative language. The highest LogDice score is associated with the verb “take” (11.1), suggesting a strong inclination to the action of assuming or claiming power, as seen in phrases like “so please, take your power”. This indicates a focus on empowerment and encouraging individuals to actively assert their influence. The verb “use” (10.9) is another significant collocate, reflecting the candidates’ tendency to the practical application of power. For example, “when we use our voice and we use our power” highlights the importance of utilizing one’s abilities and influence effectively. This is complemented by the verb “have” (10.4), which suggests an acknowledgment of inherent power, as seen in “we have the power to”.

The pronominal possessors “your” (10.8) and “our” (9.4) further underline themes of personal and

collective empowerment. The frequent use of “your power” and “our power” reflects a focus on both individual and communal strength, encouraging both personal agency and collective action.

Evaluative adjectives

Adjectives showing positive attitude in the category of judgement (good, able) and appreciation (big, beautiful, important) have been found in the data set. They are subsequently presented in Tables 6 to 10.

Table 6. Collocation with “good”

Collocations with “Good”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Nouns	protection	<i>prevention and protection are better</i>	13.4
	everything	<i>everything is good but in moderation</i>	13.0
	career	<i>we can land a good job and land a good career</i>	10.9
	future	<i>education is a primary source and a ticket for better future</i>	10.9
	job	<i>we can land a good job and land a good career</i>	10.8
	society	<i>in order to live in a better society</i>	10.8
	friend	<i>when I’m with my best friend</i>	10.8
	relationship	<i>have always had a good relationship with each other</i>	10.8
	way	<i>I think that the best way</i>	10.5
	thing	<i>the best thing that happened in my life</i>	10.2
Verbs	know	<i>hope that the person has matured and known better</i>	13.0
	feel	<i>I’m feeling good within myself</i>	12.2
	be	<i>prevention and protection are better</i>	8.8

Table 6 presents the collocations of the adjective “good” in the candidates’ evaluative language. Nouns collocating with “good” exhibit a variety of contexts. “Protection” (13.4) shows a focus on safety and well-being, as illustrated in phrases like “prevention and protection are better”. Similarly, “everything” (13.0) in phrases like “everything is good but in moderation” indicates a balanced approach to life. The collocations “career” (10.9), “job” (10.8), and “future” (10.9) emphasize the importance of professional success and long-term aspirations, seen in responses such as “we can land a good job and land a good career” and “education is a primary source and a ticket for better future”. The frequent association with “society” (10.8), “friend” (10.8), and “relationship” (10.8) reveals the candidates’ focus on social and interpersonal aspects, reflected in expressions like “in order to live in a better society” and “have always had a good relationship with each other”. This suggests a broad evaluative emphasis on the quality of social bonds and communal living. Verbs collocating with “good” also offer insights. The verb “know” (13.0) in contexts like “hope that the person has matured and known better” points to the importance of growth and improvement. The verb “feel” (12.2), seen in “I’m feeling good within myself”, highlights the significance of self-perception and emotional well-being.

Table 7. Collocation with “important”

Collocations with “Important”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Nouns	movement	<i>the most important movement in our time is</i>	12.7
	thing	<i>the most important thing for me in life is</i>	12.4
	part	<i>women are such an important part of the society</i>	12.0
Verbs	realize	<i>I have realized something very important</i>	14.0
	be	<i>there is nothing more important than</i>	12.2
	very	<i>I think that’s very important</i>	11.8
Adverbs	incredibly	<i>I think it’s incredibly important that</i>	11.5
	so	<i>my friends and family are so important</i>	10.8
	really	<i>I think that’s really important</i>	10.5
Infinitive objects	invest	<i>it is so important to invest in others</i>	12.7
	have	<i>it’s important to have a balance</i>	12.7
	teach	<i>It is very important to teach young girls today</i>	12.4

Table 7 showcases the collocations of the adjective “important” in the evaluative language of the candidates. The noun collocates highlight the areas deemed crucial by the candidates. “movement” (12.7), as in “the most important movement in our time is”, suggests a focus on social or cultural shifts that are considered pivotal. “Thing” (12.4), in phrases like “the most important thing for me in life is”, emphasizes personal priorities and values. “Part” (12.0), seen in “women are such an important part of the society”, highlights

the recognition of vital societal roles, particularly emphasizing gender roles and inclusivity.

Verb collocates reveal actions associated with realizing significance. “Realize” (14.0) in “I have realized something very important” indicates moments of awareness and understanding. “Be” (12.2), as in “there is nothing more important than”, often frames responses of ultimate value or priority.

Adverb collocates, such as “very” (11.8), “incredibly” (11.5), “so” (10.8), and “really” (10.5), accentuate the degree of importance, with examples like “I think that’s very important” and “I think it’s incredibly important that”. These modifiers intensify the perceived significance of the subject being discussed.

Infinitive objects show how importance is linked to specific actions. “invest” (12.7) and “have” (12.7), in contexts like “it is so important to invest in others” and “it’s important to have a balance”, point to actions the candidates believe are crucial. “Teach” (12.4), as in “it is very important to teach young girls today”, highlights the value placed on education and mentorship.

Table 8. Collocation with “able”

Collocations with “Able”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Verbs	be	<i>to be able to stand strong</i>	12.3
	help	<i>I was able to help people</i>	12.1
	influence	<i>it’s being able to influence and inspire other people</i>	11.2
	unite	<i>we work together to be able to unite</i>	11.2
	unify	<i>he was able to unify the entire nation</i>	11.2
	report	<i>they should have a total freedom to be able to report</i>	11.2
Infinitive objects	remember	<i>I would want to be able to remember them</i>	11.2
	communicate	<i>somebody who’s able to communicate a message</i>	11.2
	play	<i>they’re able to play</i>	11.2
	stand	<i>to be able to stand strong</i>	11.2
	have	<i>to be able to have a social transformation</i>	11.1
	be	<i>kids are able to be kids</i>	10.1

Table 8 presents the collocations of the word “able”, revealing how candidates use this term to express capability and potential in various contexts. The verb “be” (12.3) is a key collocate, exemplified in phrases like “to be able to stand strong”. This usage indicates an emphasis on personal resilience and strength. This sense of capability is further demonstrated by the frequent infinitive object constructions.

Infinitive objects such as “help” (12.1), as in “I was able to help people”, highlight a focus on social responsibility and support. Similarly, “influence” and “inspire” (both 11.2) in “it’s being able to influence and inspire other people” show a desire to have a positive impact on others.

Verbs like “unite” and “unify” (both 11.2), as seen in “we work together to be able to unite” and “he was able to unify the entire nation”, emphasize the importance of bringing people together and fostering social cohesion. “Report” (11.2), in the context “they should have a total freedom to be able to report”, underlines the significance of freedom and transparency. Other verbs, such as “remember” (11.2), “communicate” (11.2), “play” (11.2), “stand” (11.2), and “have” (11.1), reflect a range of abilities valued by the candidates.

Table 9. Collocation with “big”

Collocations with “Big”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Nouns	misconception	<i>the biggest misconception about beauty is</i>	12.0
	audience	<i>overcome that fear of a big audience</i>	12.0
	challenge	<i>the biggest challenge in my life is</i>	12.0
	pressure	<i>the biggest pressure the youth of today is facing is</i>	12.0
	difference	<i>the big difference between women and men</i>	12.0
	fear	<i>my biggest fear is</i>	11.8

Table 9 presents the collocations of the word “big” employed by the candidates. The highest LogDice scores are associated with “challenge” (12.0), “pressure” (12.0), “misconception” (12.0), “difference” (12.0), “audience” (12.0), and “fear” (11.8). These collocations indicate that candidates frequently use “big” to emphasize major obstacles and anxieties, such as the biggest challenges in their lives, societal pressures

on youth, common misconceptions about beauty, differences between genders, and overcoming the fear of speaking to large audiences. This pattern reflects the candidates' focus on discussing substantial and impactful issues in their responses.

Table 10. Collocation with “beautiful”

Collocations with “Beautiful”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Nouns	thing	<i>it's such a beautiful thing to</i>	12.6
	part	<i>our bodies are a beautiful part of a woman</i>	12.4
Verbs	make	<i>that's what makes you beautiful</i>	13.4
Adverbs	confidently	<i>I am confidently beautiful with a heart</i>	14.0

Table 10 shows the collocations of the word “beautiful” used by the candidates in their response. The high LogDice scores of “confidently” (14.0), “make” (13.4), “thing” (12.6), and “part” (12.4) suggest that candidates often use “beautiful” to express self-assurance and appreciation for physical and personal attributes, such as confidently affirming their beauty, recognizing beauty as an essential part of their identity, and valuing beautiful aspects of life and themselves. This pattern underscores the candidates' focus on promoting positive self-image and confidence.

Evaluative verbs

While Adjectives fall in the category of Judgement and Appreciation, verbs that show attitude in the data set fall into the category of Affect, showing positive desire. They comprise *want*, *love*, *like*, *embrace*, and *admire*, which will be presented in Tables 11 to 15.

Table 11. Collocation with “want”

Collocations with “Want”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Nouns	women	<i>I want all women...to</i>	11.3
	be	<i>we all want to be loved</i>	11.8
	empower	<i>I want to empower women</i>	11.5
	belong	<i>we all want to belong</i>	11.5
Infinitive objects	support	<i>deciding what we want to support in society</i>	11.5
	become	<i>I wanted to become a fashion designer</i>	11.5
	show	<i>I want to show the world</i>	11.5
	work	<i>I want to work to bring an equality</i>	11.4
	see	<i>be the change that we want to see in the world</i>	11.3

Table 11 shows the collocations of “want”, illustrating how candidates express their desires and goals. The high LogDice scores for “be” (11.8), “empower” (11.5), “belong” (11.5), “support” (11.5), “become” (11.5), “show” (11.5), “work” (11.4), and “see” (11.3) shows that candidates use “want” on a frequent basis, in relation to personal and social aspirations. For example, they often express a desire to be loved, to empower women, to belong to a community, to support important causes, to become successful in their careers, to show their achievements to the world, to work towards equality, and to see positive changes in society. This shows they are focused on both personal growth and making a difference, showcasing a proactive and aspirational attitude.

Table 12. Collocation with “love”

Collocation with “Love”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Pronominal subjects	I	<i>the first person that I love is God</i>	9.0
	we	<i>we love welcoming people</i>	8.4
Infinitive objects	bring	<i>we'd love to bring people into our country</i>	13.0
	teach	<i>I would love to teach young girls</i>	12.7

Table 12 displays the collocations of “love” used by the candidates. The LogDice score of 13.0 for “bring” and 12.7 for “teach” indicate that candidates frequently use “love” in the context of wanting to bring people together and to foster education. Pronominal subjects like “I” (9.0) and “we” (8.4) show personal and collective expressions of love, such as loving God or welcoming people. These patterns reflect a marked tendency to a desire for inclusive and nurturing actions, specifically the candidates' values of

community, education, and personal devotion.

Table 13. Collocation with “like”

Collocations with “Like”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Infinitive objects	start	<i>I’d like to start off by saying ...</i>	12.7
	know	<i>I would like to know a lot about ...</i>	12.7
	do	<i>That’s precisely what I would like to do ...</i>	12.2
	see	<i>I would love to an age increase ...</i>	12.2

Table 13 shows the collocations of “like”, showing the candidates’ preferred actions. Highly collocated with the verb “like”, “start” (12.7) and “know” (12.7) indicate a frequent desire to begin discussions or acquire knowledge. Similarly, “do” (12.2) and “see” (12.2) reflect a proactive stance towards taking action and envisioning changes. These collocations illustrate the candidates’ forward-thinking attitudes and their focus on initiating dialogue, gaining insights, and implementing positive changes.

Table 14. Collocation with “embrace”

Collocation with “Embrace”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Objects	uniqueness	<i>embrace your uniqueness</i>	13.4
	culture	<i>we should embrace all different cultures</i>	12.7
	who	<i>embrace who you are</i>	13.0

Table 14 illustrates the collocations of “embrace” employed by the candidates. There is a frequent promotion of embracing individual uniqueness, cultural diversity, and personal identity, as evidenced by the high LogDice scores for “uniqueness” (13.4), “culture” (12.7), and “who” (13.0). These collocations reflect a consistent message of self-acceptance and cultural appreciation among the candidates.

Table 15. Collocation with “admire”

Collocations “Admire”	Collocates	Examples	LogDice
Objects	strength	<i>I admire their strength</i>	13.4
Pronominal subjects	I	<i>One of the women I admire in the world</i>	8.0

Table 15 presents the collocations of “admire” in the evaluative language of the candidates. The word “strength” has a high LogDice score of 13.4, indicating that candidates frequently express admiration for strength in individuals, an example of which is “I admire their strength”. Additionally, the frequent use of the pronoun “I” (8.0) with “admire” shows that candidates often personalize their expressions of admiration. Phrases like “One of the women I admire in the world” suggest that admiration is framed through personal experiences and viewpoints.

Evaluative adverbs

There were three notable adverbs showing attitude found in the data set, namely, *easily*, *incredibly* and *hard*. The collocation of the adverb “easily” with verbs, specifically the verb “break” had a high LogDice score of 14.0. An example given is “my heart breaks very easily”, which illustrates the frequent use of “easily” to modify verbs, often conveying a sense of vulnerability or susceptibility. The adverb “incredibly” often pairs with adjectives like “difficult” (with LogDice score of 13.4) and “important” (with LogDice score of 11.5). Examples like “this is an incredibly difficult issue” and “it’s incredibly important that” demonstrate how the adverb intensifies the meaning of these adjectives. Regarding “hard”, it collocates with verbs, notably “work” (with LogDice score of 13.4). The example “I always work hard for what I want” highlights how “hard” is used to describe the manner of working, suggesting diligence and effort.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into how MU candidates use evaluative language during the high-pressure final Q&A sessions to align with the competition’s ethos of empowerment,

inclusivity, and social advocacy. Through the analysis of the evaluative language patterns, it is evident that the candidates strategically employ specific linguistic resources to convey these values, positioning themselves as advocates for positive change and champions of global issues.

The use of evaluative language to express empowerment is most evident in the collocations of words like “power” and “voice.” For example, collocations such as “take your power” and “use your power” reflect a direct engagement with themes of self-empowerment and personal agency. Candidates emphasize the importance of individuals taking control of their lives and exercising their influence to create positive change. This aligns with the competition’s broader message of empowering women to take leadership roles in both personal and social contexts. By focusing on the proactive use of “power” and “voice”, candidates highlight their confidence and ability to inspire others to take action, which is central to the MU ethos of empowerment.

Inclusivity is another significant theme present in the candidates’ responses, as reflected in collocations like “equal opportunities” and “our inner beauty.” These phrases indicate a focus on both equality and diversity, demonstrating the candidates’ commitment to advocating for fairness and inclusiveness. The use of possessive pronouns like “our” in these contexts further emphasizes a sense of collective identity, framing beauty and opportunities as universal and shared experiences. This linguistic strategy suggests that candidates are mindful of representing diverse perspectives and advocating for equal access to opportunities for all, irrespective of background, thus promoting an inclusive worldview that is integral to the values upheld by the MU competition.

The candidates also engage in social advocacy through their responses, as demonstrated by the frequent use of verbs such as “raise”, “help”, and “unify.” For instance, phrases like “raise our voice” and “help people” reveal a strong commitment to addressing societal challenges and advocating for those in need. Collocations around the word “voice” are particularly significant, with candidates using expressions like “don’t let anyone silence your voice” to advocate for freedom of speech and the importance of vocalizing concerns about social justice. Furthermore, the use of terms like “opportunity” in conjunction with “need” and “give” reflects a deep understanding of the importance of creating equal chances for underprivileged individuals, reinforcing the candidates’ roles as advocates for social equality.

The findings of this study provide both theoretical and practical insights into the use of evaluative language in public speaking, particularly within the high-stakes context of the MU competition. By examining how candidates strategically employ language to convey empowerment, inclusivity, and advocacy, the study contributes to our understanding of spontaneous speech patterns in public speaking scenarios. These insights extend beyond the specific setting of beauty pageants, offering broader implications for discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, and performance contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals the pivotal role of evaluative language in the high-pressure context of MU Q&A sessions, demonstrating how candidates strategically employ language to express empowerment, inclusivity, and social advocacy. The analysis highlights the frequent use of collocations involving terms like “power”, “voice”, and “opportunity”, which align with the ethos of the MU competition, particularly in promoting women’s leadership, equality, and advocacy for social change. These findings contribute to discourse analysis and corpus linguistics by illustrating the dynamic role of evaluative language in public speaking, particularly in high-stakes, spontaneous communication.

The practical implications of this study extend to performance and media contexts, where language is a critical tool for influencing public perception and projecting a positive self-image. The results underscore the importance of language in shaping persuasive communication strategies in public arenas, offering insights for educators, public speakers, and media professionals.

However, the study is limited by its focus on English-language responses, potentially overlooking the linguistic nuances in non-English-speaking candidates. Additionally, the exclusive focus on collocational patterns may leave out other significant linguistic features such as syntax or rhetorical strategies. Future research should expand the scope to include multimodal elements like gestures and explore linguistic differences across cultural and linguistic backgrounds in similar high-stakes settings.

In conclusion, this research shed more insights into the significance of evaluative language as a tool for persuasion in public speaking, offering a framework for understanding how linguistic choices reflect broader social and cultural values. The insights gained from this study hold value beyond the MU competition, informing discourse analysis, media communication, and the study of spontaneous public speech.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors confirm that they have read and followed the ethical requirements for publication in the Journal of Digital Sociohumanities. This research does not involve human subjects, animal experiments, or any data collected from social media platforms. The data analyzed were publicly available transcripts from MU Q&A sessions, and no identifiable personal information was used. Therefore, no ethical approval or informed consent was required.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Long Viet Le: Conceptualization, data collection, corpus analysis, data interpretation, writing the original draft, and visualization. Lien-Huong Vo: Conceptualization, methodology, data checking, tabulation, revising and editing, supervision.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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