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# DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED PRAYERS OF ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO: AN ATTITUDINAL APPROACH

Bema Rita D. Diesto, MAEd.

*Iloilo Science and Technology University  
Iloilo City Campus, Iloilo, Philippines  
Email: bemarita.diesto@isatu.edu.ph  
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-8109-616X*

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Corresponding Author: Bema Rita D. Diesto, MAEd.  
([bemarita.diesto@isatu.edu.ph](mailto:bemarita.diesto@isatu.edu.ph))

## ABSTRACT

*Prayers are a vital form of communication with God. St. Augustine of Hippo is a Catholic saint known as one of the Latin Fathers of the Catholic Church, and his works have influenced the church's dogma (The Augustinians, n.d.). This study examined St. Augustine's selected prayers through an attitudinal approach, specifically affect, judgment, and appreciation. Anchored in the attitudinal approach based on the Appraisal Theory of Martin and White (2005) within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) postulated by Halliday, it aimed to analyse Augustine's emotions as presented in the language of his prayers. Rather than focusing on theological interpretation, the researcher employed discourse analysis to examine how language functions as a tool for emotion, faith, and self-examination. The findings reveal that prayers depict not only the emotional but also the spiritual trajectory from insecurity (regret) to longing to fulfilment. Augustine's prayers are not solely devotional texts but also represent emotional depth, moral reflection, and theological judgment. Theologians should explore not only the spiritual aspect of prayer but also its emotional side, as a guide for believers toward reflective and affective prayer.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Discourse, Selected Prayers, St. Augustine, Hippo, Attitudinal Approach.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Religion has been an integral part of human culture. Prayer is the link between religion and language (Leydecker, 2014). Historically, humanity has consistently used prayer to communicate with the divine. It is a phenomenon expressed across cultures and religious traditions and is essential to people's religious experience. For many, prayer is the main act of faith (Burdzy & Pargament, 2013). Indeed, it is an important form of communication with God. Through prayer, people can express their sentiments, including fear, joy, hope, sorrow, and a longing for divine love. It is a coping mechanism that helps people navigate the unpredictable challenges they face in their daily lives. Amid calamities, sickness, and political unrest, humankind turns to prayer to deepen its relationship with God (Newman, Nezlek, & Thrash, 2024).

One of the most influential figures who embodied a profound relationship with God is St. Augustine, a saint in the Catholic Church. As a theologian, he produced many written works that influenced both Western philosophy and Christianity. He was revered as one of the Latin Fathers of the Catholic Church and as a doctor of the church. His work is considered foundational theology and has shaped the doctrine of the Catholic Church (Tornau, 2024). His early life was spent pursuing his ambitions and pleasures. He was on a spiritual quest for lasting happiness and inner peace. He is believed to have converted to the Catholic faith through prayers and the influence of St. Monica, his mother. After his historic conversion to the Catholic faith, he committed to spending his life as a "servant of God" and to dedicating himself to prayer, work, and fellowship. He established a monastic life that produced many written works, including 200 books, nearly 1,000 sermons, letters, and other writings. During his final days, he prayed for penitential psalms, which he requested to be written on the wall of his room (The Augustinians, n.d.). In his monastic life, St. Augustine is a man of prayer who communicates with and confesses to the divine. His famous "Confession" is a memoir that shows his dedication and conversion to Christianity, presented as a letter to God (Schaff, 1887).

St. Augustine's understanding of the importance and power of prayer reflects its profound spiritual significance. According to St. Augustine, "The cry of the heart is a solemn earnestness of thought which, when given vent to in prayer, expresses the profound yearning of the one who prays" (White, 2002). It is an expression of one's thoughts in a spiritual sense.

Despite extensive scholarly work on St. Augustine, much of the research on him has been conducted through theological, philosophical, or historical lenses. However, none has been done through a linguistic lens, analysing the prayers as a form of communication that reveals his inner emotions and devotion to God through language. This research delves into Augustine's choice of words to understand how prayer serves as a form of expression of a human's relationship with God.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Prayer

Prayer is a 'communicative verbal expression' of a person's relationship with the divine. It is a performative act that shows how things 'could be changed' and serves to 'map affect and care.' Every prayer uttered to God carries an emotion, evoking an 'affective charge.' The affective side of prayer invokes sincerity, care, concern, and love. Prayer is a multifaceted social and communicative act that reflects care and concern for oneself and others (Bandak, 2021). Although prayer is an act of religiosity, it can elevate a person's concern, becoming conversational, petitionary, and meditative (Paloma & Gallup, 1984).

This communicative purpose of prayer is manifested in different contexts. People used prayers to ask for God's forgiveness. According to Upenieks (2023), 80% of respondents prayed to ask for God's forgiveness. Two-thirds of them praise God much of their time or all the time in prayer for the well-being of others. They turn to prayer during difficult times as a coping mechanism. It is also interpreted as a personal relationship with the divine, in which they perceive God as a friend with whom they can speak. As manifested in the study conducted by Newman, Nezlek, and Thrash (2023), prayer is part of people's daily lives. Supplication is prominent when negative experiences are high, and well-being is low. Prayer that emanates adoration and gratitude leads to thanksgiving and confession of guilty feelings.

### 2.2 St. Augustine

The transformative power of prayer is embodied in the life of St. Augustine, who had a troubled youth. He was ambitious and sought acceptance, which led him to a sinful life. In his autobiography, "Confession," a letter to God, he admitted that he and his group of friends stole things just for fun. As a young man, he also had sexual encounters with women to impress other men (Kranz, 2020). However, after his conversion to Catholicism, he devoted his life to writing books that teach the

goodness of God. He also produced many prayers that demonstrate his dedication to the divine. Throughout his life, he embraced sacred language to understand God, albeit partially (Salvatore, 2024).

### 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to analyse selected prayers written by St. Augustine using the attitudinal approach of appraisal theory.

Specifically, this study sought to do the following:

1. Find the words, phrases, and lines that show affect, judgment, and appreciation; and
2. Analyse the attitudes expressed in the selected prayers of St. Augustine of Hippo.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research approach and employed discourse analysis to examine the corpus. The corpus comprises selected prayers from St. Augustine's written texts. The prayers were selected for their emotional richness and theological content. The texts were segmented into phrases as linguistic units. These were categorised according to the appraisal theory attitudinal subsystems by

Martin and White (2005). The researcher used a coding method to identify, analyse, and interpret the meaning of the words and phrases in the prayers relating to emotions and theology. An Augustinian priest was consulted to confirm the authenticity of the prayers and the analysis.

The theoretical framework guiding the study was the attitude subsystem of Appraisal theory. Appraisal theory, by Martin and White (2005), is part of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) of Michael Halliday. SFL views language as a social semiotic system (Gebhard & Accurso, 2020). Language functions ideationally (representing experience and ideas), interpersonally (enacting social relationships), and textually (organising discourse coherently). Appraisal theory is an extension of the interpersonal metafunction of SFL (Hadidi & Mohammadbagheri-Parvin, 2015). Attitude is a type of interpersonal metafunction of language. The subtypes are: affect (happiness/unhappiness), judgment (normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, and propriety), and appreciation (reaction, composition, and valuation) (Lui & Thompson, 2009).

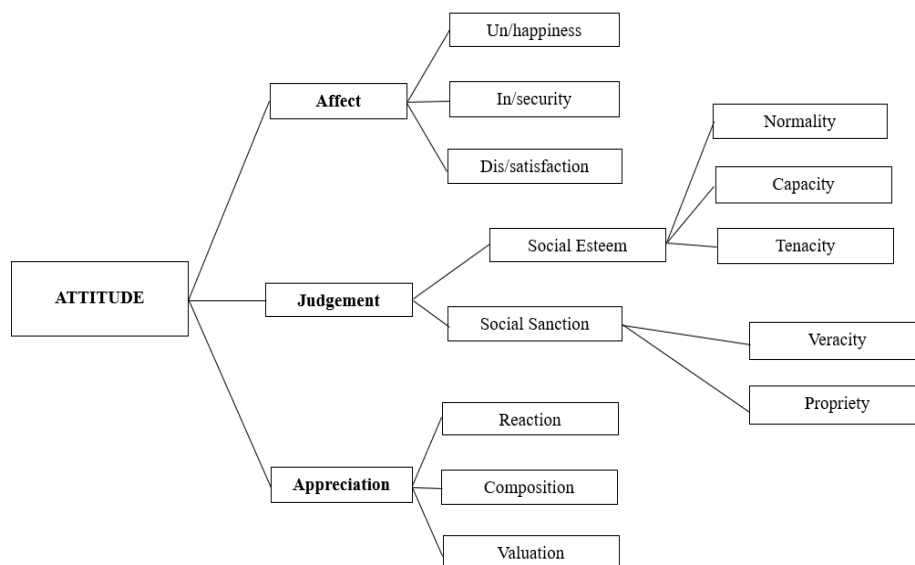


Figure 1: The Attitudinal Sub-types based on the Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005).  
The Diagram of the Study.

#### 4.1 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are vital in research. According to Resnik (2020), ethics refers to a standard of conduct or procedure for conducting research and analysing data. Adherence to ethical standards in research helps prevent errors and the falsification of research data.

In accordance with these ethical standards, the

researcher began by reading St. Augustine's writings. She interviewed religious figures to gain an in-depth understanding of St. Augustine's cultural and theological background. The goal was to prevent misunderstandings of the prayers and to recognise the spiritual importance of St. Augustine to Catholic communities. Respecting the prayers also means respecting the believers. The researcher also employed proper attribution of essential sources, such as citing

original texts and scholarly commentaries. She maintained objectivity, especially in interpreting and analysing attitudinal viewpoints within the prayers, by differentiating between theological and linguistic interpretations. Information from other sources was properly cited to avoid plagiarism and maintain the study's credibility.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 5.1 The Prayers

The following are the prayers that the researcher selected.

#### 5.1.1. Holy Spirit Prayer

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,  
That my thoughts may all be holy.  
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,  
That my work, too, may be holy.  
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,  
That I love, but what is holy.  
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,  
To defend all that is holy.  
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,  
That I always may be holy (Pierced Hearts of Jesus  
and Mary, n.d.)

**Table 1: Words, Phrases, and Lines in the prayer entitled "Holy Spirit Prayer" that show Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation.**

Attitude	Subtype	Words/Phrases/Lines
Affect	Happiness/ <b>Unhappiness</b>	That my thoughts may all be holy
	Security/ <b>Insecurity</b>	Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, / That I always be Holy
	Satisfaction/ <b>Dissatisfaction</b>	Act in me, O Holy Spirit, / That my work, too, may be holy
Judgment	Normality	Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, / That I love but what is holy
	Capacity	Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, / To defend all that is holy.
	Tenacity	To defend all that is holy.
	Veracity	That I love, but what is holy
	Propriety	Act in me, O Holy Spirit, / That my work, too, may be holy
Appreciation	Reaction	holy (repeated)
	Composition	Breathe in me... / Act in me... / Draw my heart...
	Valuation	That I always may always be holy

Table 1 shows the author's attitude towards the divine, serving as an appeal for sanctification through God's guidance. The repetition of the word "holy" in each line highlights the author's desire for blessedness to permeate every aspect of life. This recurrence serves not only as a rhetorical device but also as a theological plea for the Holy Spirit to dwell and consecrate every part of the speaker's being. The poet's lexical choice of the term "holy" intensifies the burning desire for veneration, reverence, and devotion, thereby enunciating the hunger for spiritual purity, which is the divine standard. The prayer emphasises the essence of sanctity as the goal of the religious life.

Beyond the theological significance of holiness, the rhythm of the prayer is appealing not only for its call to holiness but also for the positive feelings it may evoke. The line "That my thoughts may all be holy" shows the connection between holiness and real happiness. The repetition declares that pure joy is not in thoughts but in sanctification. The request "Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, / That I always may be holy" addresses security. The word "guard" in the final line transforms the author's insecurity into assurance of God's protection. The phrase "Act in me, O Holy Spirit, / That my work, too, may be holy" serves as a resolution to dissatisfaction with one's labour. It indicates that satisfying work can be achieved if it is

morally correct through divine inspiration.

The rhythm also insists on a norm for moral conduct and the soul. The line "That I love but what is holy" shows that holiness is the normative object of love. Affection for holy concepts is the true, moral, and expected way to love. "Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, / To defend all that is holy" acknowledges the poet's incapacity to defend what is holy. He therefore asks the divine for strength. The phrases "To defend all that is holy" and "That I love what is holy" show perseverance in faith (tenacity) and sincerity of devotion (veracity). These phrases allude to the fact that holiness is the goal of sincere and steadfast dedication. The phrase "That my work, too, may be holy" establishes a standard for required or correct moral behaviour (propriety). The behaviour or actions are the responsibility of the worshipper to be morally upright.

From an aesthetic viewpoint, the repetition of "holy" evokes reverence. The repeated word creates a rhythm that inspires admiration or awe towards sanctification, making the prayer an act of worship. The parallel structure ("Breathe... Act... Draw... Strengthen... Guard...") creates a balanced composition in which each line reflects the one before it, establishing order and showing that holiness is perfectly harmonious. Finally, the goal, "That I always may be holy," suggests the valuation of holiness as the

highest good. The repetitive structure of this prayer, which seeks holiness in every aspect, is a proclamation that holiness is the way to righteousness.

To create a ritualistic rhythm that reflects a liturgical prayer, each line begins with an imperative verb, such as *"Breathe, Act, Draw, Strengthen, Guard."* Imperative verbs command the listener to do something. In prayers, however, these verbs serve as appeals or petitions, indicating urgency, a need for reformation, and dependence, often seeking divine intervention. The verbs represent different aspects of spiritual life. The first word, *"breathe,"* evokes a primordial existential need in the poet. The term links the speaker's physical life (breath) to his spiritual or divine life, entering his thoughts. The next term, *"act,"* signifies the sanctification of one's endeavours, a humble submission to the will of the divine. *"Draw"* elicits a deep emotional desire for holiness and divine affection. The word *"strengthen"* conveys courage and defence. *"Guard"* is a request for protection, since humans are vulnerable to sin. The progression of these verbs from internal (thoughts, heart) to external (work, defend) to protection (guard) mirrors St. Augustine's holistic theology of sanctification. It serves as a guide in the author's spiritual journey.

This structural approach serves a clear liturgical purpose. Repetition and rhythm create parallelism that reinforces the solemnity and rhythm found in litanies and psalms (Muldoon, n.d.). The repetition of these imperative verbs reveals the cadence of liturgical prayer, guiding the people in recitation.

This style aids in recalling, chanting, and memorising during invocation, evoking a meditative state in worshippers.

Ultimately, the prayer's ritualistic rhythm is not only seeking holiness but also seeking the positive feelings (affect) that holiness may bring. Its rhythm also imposes a conduct or norm (a judgment) that the worshipper needs to uphold in their moral life. The rhythm elevates holiness to the highest value. The prayer's simple, repetitive structure turns the wording into a spiritual act that engages the worshipper's emotions, defines moral duties, and establishes moral values.

5.1.2. *Late Have I Loved You*

Late have I loved you, Beauty, so ancient and so new, late have I loved you!  
 Lo, you were within,  
 But I am outside, seeking you there for you,  
 And upon the shapely things you have made  
 I rushed headlong – I, misshapen.  
 You were with me, but I was not with you.  
 They held me back far from you,  
 those things which would have no being,  
 Were they not in you?  
 You called, shouted, broke through my deafness;  
 you flared, blazed, banished my blindness;  
 you lavished your fragrance, I gasped, and now I  
 pant for you;  
 I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst;  
 you touched me, and I burned for your peace  
 (Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, n.d.)

Table 2: *Words, Phrases, and Lines in the prayer entitled "Late Have I Loved You" that show the Attitudinal Subtypes.*

Attitude	Subtype	Words/Phrases/Lines
Affect	Happiness/Unhappiness	Late have I loved you (repeated) / I rushed headlong / ...broke through my deafness / ...banished my blindness.
	Security/Insecurity	I, misshapen.
Judgment	Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	I gasped / I pant for you / I hunger and thirst / I burned for your peace /
	Propriety	Late have I loved you (repeated) / I, misshapen.
Appreciation	Tenacity	I rushed headlong
	Composition	...shapely things...
	Valuation	Beauty so ancient and so new, / You called, shouted, broke through... / You flared, blazed, banished... / You lavished your fragrance...

Table 2 presents the words, phrases, and lines of the prayer as identified according to the attitudinal subtypes. The repetition of the phrase *"Late have I loved you"* as the title and as the first and third phrases in the first line evokes feelings of unhappiness, regret, sorrow, insecurity, and frustration at having missed the opportunity to love God. The repetition is akin to a refrain, transforming a confession into an ongoing anguish and intensifying the emotion's weight. The lateness of love is like a voracious

wound: love delayed is a loss of love, a loss of time, and a loss of opportunity. The disordered action, *"I rushed headlong,"* conveys desperation driven by one's own desire without discernment. The term *"rushed"* conveys a sense of desperation and panic, while *"headlong"* suggests a loss of balance. The phrase describes misguided actions that imply past unhappiness or desperation and is followed by *"I, misshapen,"* which expresses moral or spiritual insecurity about divine goodness. The pause and

isolating comma create a pronouncement or verdict of oneself as deformed, crooked, and twisted (*misshapen*).

However, the prayer indicates a shift with divine intervention. "*Broke through my deafness*" and "*banished my blindness*" are transitional phrases that indicate physical as well as spiritual weakness, shattered, or impairment, which, with divine intervention, because of God's love, change into happiness or relief—these verbs, though violent, are liberating and suggest the end of fragility. "*I gasped*" is an instinctive reaction to the presence of the divine. It is an indication of satisfaction and awe. "*I pant for you,*" "*I hunger and thirst,*" and "*I burned for your peace*" intensify the deep, strong desire for the divine, so that His absence feels like pain and proximity feels like spiritual nourishment. The word "*peace*" conveys a sense of satisfaction and wholeness.

The affective analysis emphasises the emotional trajectory that begins with regret, leads to insecurity, instils longing and desire, and concludes with satisfaction. Repetition, imagery, and metaphor heighten the intensity, building to a sense of momentum. The forward movement of the lines creates a sense of urgency.

Beyond affect, the judgment subtypes of attitude are based on the ethical and moral evaluation of human behaviour (Martin & White, 2005). In this prayer, the poet judges himself only negatively. The repeated phrase "*Late have I loved you*" is an enactment of self-judgement that indicates a moral failure of responsibility (propriety) in loving the divine late. It suggests that love should be early, constant, and proper to be considered appropriate. "*I misshapen*" is a self-condemnation referring to deviation from moral or aesthetic norms; hence, it indicates this ethical deficiency, a movement away from goodness towards badness. The phrase "*I rushed headlong*" critiques reckless determination by depicting an abrupt move without guidance; thus, it becomes a misdirected desire, courage without wisdom, and intensity without fidelity.

Contrary to the negative self-judgements, the appreciation phrases and lines of the prayer centre on the evaluation of the object (love of God and beauty), while the speaker's actions are filled with value - beauty, power, abundance, and coherence; thus, the result will be universally positive. The phrase "*Beauty so ancient and so new*" conveys praise for God's beauty, which is at once timeless and fresh. It denotes unchanging yet renewing divine beauty. Beauty, according to St. Augustine, is timeless and surprising, and has the power to awaken humility, in which a person becomes akin to the divine and

eternal being. "*Shapely things*" imply appreciation of all created things based on their structure. It indicates that the world is not accidentally made, since all things are grandiosely architected, styled, and framed; thus, giving back the valuation to the Creator.

The phrase "*You lavished your fragrance...*" conveys the abundance of positive qualities. Fragrance is inhaled and penetrates the body. In the Bible, perfumes are highly valued, as stated in Proverbs (27:9):

*Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantries of*

*a friend spring from their heartfelt advice.*

(Bible.com, n.d.)

Perfumes are used in worship and anointing because of their pleasing aroma. For ancient Jews, using fragrance for anointing is an act of consecration, sacrifice, and worship (Biblehub, n.d.). "*Fragrance*" indicates the delightful presence of the divine, and it is equated to Christ's love as described in Ephesians (5:2), as a

*...fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

(BibleGateway.com, n.d.)

This phrase indicates that the speaker longs for and values the sweet fragrance of God's love, as stated in the next phrases: "*I gasped, ... I pant for you, ... I hunger and thirst...*"

In summary, the prayer traces the emotional arc from confession to communion, from negative to positive. The words move from weakness and moral exposure to the author's openness or communion with divine love. It begins with regrets and misalignment (affect and judgment), followed by intervention, rupture, and awakening (appreciation of acts), and concludes with the fulfilment of desire that intensifies into peace (affect and appreciation).

### 5.1.3. Act of Hope

For your mercies' sake, O Lord my God, tell me what you are to me.

Say to my soul: "I am your salvation."

So, speak that I may hear, O Lord; my heart is listening;

Open it that it may hear you, and say to my soul, "I am your salvation."

After hearing this word, may I come in haste to take hold of you?

Hide not your face from me. Let me see your face even if I die, lest I die longing to see it.

The house of my soul is too small to receive you; let it be enlarged by you.

It is all in ruins; do you repair it? There are things in it - I confess, and I know - that must offend your

sight.

But who shall cleanse it? Or to what others besides you shall I cry out?

From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare your servant. Amen (Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, n.d.)

**Table 3: Words, Phrases, and Lines in the Prayer entitled "Act of Hope" that reveal Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation.**

Attitude	Subtype	Words/Phrases/Lines
Affect	Happiness/Unhappiness	Hide not your face from me / lest I die longing to see it.
	Security/Insecurity	... tell me what you are to me / my heart is listening / ... secret sins, cleanse me, / ... spare your servant
	Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	... say to my soul: "I am your salvation." / ... may I come in haste to take hold of you. / let it be enlarged by you / do you repair it
Judgment	Capacity	Open it that it may hear you, / ... all in ruins: do you repair it / The house of my soul is too small / ... who shall cleanse it?
	Tenacity	... who shall cleanse it? / to what others besides you shall I cry out?
	Propriety	... must offend your sight / ... secret sins...
	Veracity	I confess, and I know
Appreciation	Valuation	... mercies' sake, O Lord my God / I am your salvation
	Composition	... all in ruins /

Table 3 presents the lines, words, and phrases that reveal the speaker's attitude. This prayer begins with a subtype of appreciation (valuation). "...mercies' sake" is a positive appeal that emphasises the value of divine kindness. Another plea follows: "... tell me what you are to me," which conveys emotional insecurity (affect) and anxiety about a lack of knowledge of the Lord. It indicates uneasiness and scepticism. The command "say to my soul: I am your salvation" reveals the fulfilment of a desire, which may be heard as an assurance from God. The directive reveals an unsatisfied longing for security. "... my heart is listening" implies the author's insecurity about not hearing God, indicating weakness and a need for connection with the divine. The demand or request for "Open it" is a negative judgment of the speaker's capacity (negative self), implying that his heart cannot hear because it is closed. "... may I come in haste" indicates strong yearning and desperation, showing longing for the Almighty. The phrase expresses excitement and anticipation for the divine. It has a positive effect since it explicitly conveys joy in approaching the divine. "... to take hold of you" discloses a connection or relational bond between the speaker and God.

However, the prayer also reveals fears and shortcomings. The next phrase, "Hide not your face from me," conveys fear of abandonment and separation from the Almighty, a direct plea against an unwanted state of life. The undesirable state is further revealed in the phrase "... lest I die longing to see it," which affirms the speaker's dissatisfaction and unfulfilled desire. The phrase "The house of my soul is too small" is a judgment of the insufficient capacity of the author's soul to contain the presence of God. Still referring to the "house of my soul," "... all in ruins" conveys a negative assessment of the abstract

structure of the speaker's soul, suggesting it is broken or damaged. The phrases "let you enlarge it" and "do you repair it" express transformative satisfaction, in which the author envisions his soul being restored through divine intervention.

The prayer intensifies into confession and moral examination. In the next line, "There are things in it - I confess, and I know - that must offend your sight," the word "offend" is a negative judgment that expresses the speaker's inner state and actions, which are believed offensive in the eyes of the divine. In contrast, the phrase "I confess, and I know" is a positive judgment of his honesty. In the succeeding line, the rhetorical question "... who shall cleanse it?" directly and positively judges God as a powerful being capable of cleansing his soul. The phrase "... secret sins..." conveys a negative moral judgment. The author acknowledges his failures (hidden impropriety) and vulnerability to outside forces. This act of recognition shows a comprehensive moral self-examination.

Overall, this prayer also reveals an affective trajectory that moves from a positive appeal to an intense desire for divine intervention, to self-assessment, and to confession. The negative self-judgement (capacity, propriety) stands in contrast to the positive evaluation of God (valuation), creating an asymmetrical relationship with the Almighty in which the human position is in need, while the divine position is the ultimate fulfilment of that need. Although negative self-judgement is evident, the author's intense longing (unhappiness, tenacity) is presented as virtuous. It is a manifestation of spiritual hunger to be cleansed by the divine. Acknowledging sin is a form of faithfulness to God. The prayer is a confession, not a condemnation, but a deliverance.

## 5.2. Summary of the Results

Within the affect subtype of the attitudinal type of appraisal theory, the prayers reveal emotional trajectories from regret or insecurity to longing for true happiness or fulfilment. The three prayers reveal the author's human weaknesses or limitations that require God's intervention, which is essential for the sanctification and restoration of his soul in pursuit of true happiness.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Prayer is a means of communicating with God. St. Augustine's prayers reveal an emotional depth of devotion to the divine. "Holy Spirit Prayer," "Late Have I loved You," and "Act of Hope" disclose a consistent emotional trajectory, moving from human susceptibility to divine intervention. The prayers exhibit a deep understanding of the petitioner's human qualities, such as dependence and imperfection, as well as the capacity for reform through faith and divine intervention. The author's linguistic styles, such as repetition, imperative verbs, and internal cleansing, strengthen the spiritual call to longing, confession, and transformation. Implicitly, the prayers are the autobiography of St. Augustine as he is transformed from a sinner into a believer in God. The interplay of affect, judgment, and appreciation in his prayers builds a spiritual narrative that moves from troubled to a reformed being, guided by sanctifying divine grace. The prayers are not only devotional but also exhibit the saint's emotional depth, moral reflection, and theoretical judgment.

This study aligns with the research conducted by Newman, Nezelek, and Thrash (2023). According to their study, prayer serves as a means to relive and reflect on experiences and is associated with supplication and confession. Thus, prayer is linked to specific emotions and states of well-being.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, the following recommendations are made:

Language students should examine the emotional side of saints' prayers to understand how language is used to express their sentiments to God, offering valuable insight into their inner attitude towards the divine.

Theologians should not only explore the spiritual aspect of prayer but also examine the emotional dimension to guide believers towards an affective and reflective approach. They should integrate linguistic analysis into religious education to build a deeper understanding of how language can deepen the sanctity of prayer and devotion.

Members of the Catholic community should delve deeply into the emotional meanings of St. Augustine's prayers to foster a profound connection and a deep understanding of their spiritual journey, and of prayer as a means of moral and spiritual piety.

Future researchers should analyse the writings of other saints and religious figures using appraisal theory as a framework to identify similarities and differences in how they express the intensity of their devotion to the divine. By combining linguistics and theology, this approach enriches the knowledge and understanding of prayer as a spiritual phenomenon.

## 8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest associated with this study.

## 9. FUNDING

This study was supported by funding from Iloilo Science and Technology University, which is dedicated to developing innovative teaching methods.

## 10. DECLARATION OF AI USED

To check grammar, sentence structure, and plagiarism, the author used Grammarly and the free QuillBot edition. Rather than creating new content, analysing data, or concluding, these tools were used to improve readability. The author examined each output for accuracy, uniqueness, and ethical compliance.

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