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Language of horror: A syntactic analysis of audience reviews on letterboxed for the conjuring: Last rites

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Abstract - This study examined the syntactic structures used in audience reviews of *The Conjuring: Last Rites on Letterboxed*, focusing on how syntax contributed to evaluation, persuasion, and coherence in digital film discourse. Using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), 20 English-language reviews were analysed, segmented into clauses, and interpreted through Halliday's ideational, interpersonal, and textual meta-functions. Findings revealed that simple and coordinated sentences dominated the corpus, reflecting reviewers' preference for clarity, immediacy, and a conversational tone, while complex structures appeared less frequently. Syntactic analysis showed that evaluative stance was conveyed through declarative clauses, modality, and intensifiers, whereas occasional exclamatives and interrogatives heightened emotional expression. Syntax not only articulated judgments but also enhanced persuasive impact by signalling certainty, emphasis, and personal engagement. Coherence was maintained through consistent use of topical themes, conjunctions, and cohesive devices, which structured a clear progression of ideas. These patterns demonstrated that even in informal digital contexts, syntax remained central to organizing meaning and shaping readers' interpretations. Overall, the study highlighted the importance of examining syntax in understanding how audiences constructed and negotiated meaning within online film reviews.

Keywords: audience reviews, digital communication, linguistic analysis, movie reviews, online discourse, syntax patterns, syntactic structures, theme–rheme analysis

1. Introduction

In today's digital age, entertainment is not only consumed but also actively discussed and critiqued. Audiences no longer remain passive viewers; instead, they share their insights, reactions, and interpretations on social platforms where opinions converge, clash, and resonate. With digital activities becoming increasingly accessible, moviegoers are more active in providing their judgments about the media they encounter.

The features of communication platforms, being digital, interactive, and immediate, shape how media is produced, shared, and consumed. These affordances enable on-demand content, hybrid forms, and active user participation, showing that entertainment is strongly mediated by technology (Chen, 2024). As this dynamic is further strengthened by technological advancement, language becomes the primary tool for such engagements, influencing perceptions and shaping public views.

With the continuous rise of media arts products, platforms such as social media have become significant spaces for people to appreciate films and exchange opinions. They allow users to craft strong reviews that not only evaluate but also critique cultural products. Word of mouth, amplified by online reviews and social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube, plays a vital role in influencing public perception and consumer decisions in film viewing and promotion (Suvattanadilok, 2021).

Online movie reviews, in particular, rely on distinct linguistic and stylistic strategies to fulfill their pragmatic role. Reviewers frequently employ evaluative language to express judgments about films and their elements. According to Galiullina (2021), features such as personal pronouns (first and second

person), imperatives, direct appeals, and question-and-answer structures help to create a conversational tone, foster intimacy, and enhance persuasive impact in these reviews.

Among these spaces, Letterboxd has emerged as a popular hub for film enthusiasts to share their thoughts through reviews and comments. These exchanges reveal not only personal sentiments but also the linguistic and syntactic patterns that shape meaning. Examining the syntax of these reviews provides a deeper understanding of how audiences construct meaning, negotiate interpretation, and engage in collective discourse around film. Moreover, Letterboxd functions as a platform that democratizes film criticism by allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute their perspectives, thereby challenging the traditionally white male-dominated landscape of the film industry (Guina, 2025).

This study focuses on *The Conjuring: Last Rites* as a case to analyse the syntactic complexity of audience reviews on Letterboxd. While previous studies have examined the persuasive and stylistic elements of online reviews, there remains a gap in investigating the syntactic dimension of such reviews—how sentence structures, grammatical choices, and complexity levels influence meaning-making and audience engagement. Addressing this gap, the present study will analyse how syntax contributes to the articulation of evaluative stances in audience reviews. Specifically, it will explore how different syntactic constructions reflect reviewers' attempts to persuade, critique, or convey emotional reactions. By focusing on this underexplored linguistic aspect, the study contributes to a fuller understanding of how audiences use language in digital film discourse.

Syntax is one of the most significant disciplines in the study of language. Syntax is the branch of linguistics that examines the structure of sentences, how these structures are formed, and how speakers of a language comprehend and produce them through a mental representation of their organization (Roberts, 2023). As one of the major components of grammar, syntax enables individuals to understand and apply rules in constructing meaningful sentences. For instance, it governs the order of question words in interrogative sentences, the placement of adjectives before nouns, the subject-verb order in declarative sentences, the use of prepositions in prepositional phrases, and the positioning of helping verbs before main verbs (Nordquist, 2024).

Beyond its role in sentence construction, syntax serves as the foundation of coherence and clarity in communication. The arrangement of words into phrases, clauses, and sentences determines how ideas are connected, how emphasis is expressed, and how linguistic relationships are clarified. Syntax provides the framework through which speakers and writers convey thoughts that extend beyond isolated words, granting language its capacity to articulate complex ideas. Additionally, the manipulation of syntactic structures influences tone, rhythm, and style, shaping how messages are perceived and interpreted.

Moreover, syntax highlights both the universality and diversity of language. While all languages operate under structural rules, each demonstrates unique syntactic patterns that reflect cultural and linguistic identity. Thus, studying syntax not only uncovers the principles underlying language but also reveals the cognitive processes involved in sentence construction and the communicative strategies humans employ to achieve effective interaction.

Media discourse can be examined through linguistic structures such as syntax and through social functions like persuasion, engagement, and identity (Gulamova, 2022). Syntax, in particular, plays a crucial role in revealing how media texts organize meaning and influence audiences. Radyuk and Nikogosyan (2023) analysed articles from quality press and lifestyle magazines and found that syntactic stylistic devices often serve manipulative purposes. These include reinforcing opinions, exaggerating value, and appealing to readers through emotionally charged language. Their study demonstrates how syntax contributes not only to sentence construction but also to the persuasive impact of discourse.

At a broader level, media discourse shapes how information is produced, circulated, and interpreted. It highlights not just what is said but also how language is structured in different media contexts—such as news reports, editorials, reviews, and online commentary. This perspective underscores the importance of syntax in examining how meanings are constructed and how audiences are positioned and influenced through discourse.

This line of inquiry extends to the digital sphere, where audience voices are increasingly prominent. In *Digital Media Discourse in Linguistic Research*, Đorđević (2022) highlights the importance of studying discourse in digital platforms for linguistic research. While much scholarship has explored media and discourse in recent decades, it was noted that there is a lack of systematic frameworks for analysing digital media discourse through linguistic approaches. By integrating perspectives from communication, political studies, and journalism, the monograph emphasizes how digital discourse is produced and interpreted, with unique possibilities and constraints. For studies focusing on audience reviews, this provides a foundation for understanding how syntax operates within user-generated media commentary, where persuasion, engagement, and identity are particularly visible.

Film reviews play a vital role in media discourse because of their informative purpose, expressed through people's evaluations of the films they have watched. These reviews not only function as tools for evaluation but also demonstrate distinct linguistic features. Zheltukhina et al. (2020), in their study "Verbal Features of Film Reviews in the Modern American Media Discourse," showed that film reviewers frequently employ epithets, comparisons, metaphors, lexical repetition, parallel sentence structures, varied grammatical patterns, and other expressive means to convey their thoughts.

However, because of the strong evaluations often expressed by authors, readers and translators may face challenges in understanding, translating, and interpreting film reviews. Diamanti (2025) argued that film reviews exemplify a hybrid genre, both informative and strongly evaluative, which requires translators to possess not only high proficiency in the reviewers' language but also sensitivity to cultural, idiomatic, and genre-specific norms.

Kadish (2022) examined the gender-informed features of film reviews through statistical linguistic analysis. The study revealed that reviews often adopt language styles influenced by the gender of the director under discussion, while the identities of both the reviewer and the filmmaker shape the linguistic choices made. This highlights that multiple factors affect the linguistic features of film reviews.

Similarly, Szczygłowska (2022) conducted a corpus-linguistic study of 210 professional film reviews from the British media. The findings showed that reviewers frequently used referential lexical bundles—phrases describing cinematic elements, genres, and production details—while stance bundles expressing evaluation were less frequent. Although evaluative adjectives were still present, the overall profile emphasized descriptive and domain-specific vocabulary. This suggests that professional reviews balance information with evaluation through structured lexico-grammatical patterns, in contrast to more informal reviews that lean heavily on evaluative and stylistic features.

In another study, Ampaigon (2022) analysed the corpus-based genre of movie reviews on websites. The findings indicated that online reviews are more likely to focus on criticism, followed by description, contextualization, and the provision of practical information, while recommendations were given only to a limited extent. This demonstrates that online reviewers tend to critique films more heavily, prioritizing the purpose of informing readers about the nature and quality of the movie.

In today's digital world, the manner in which individuals communicate through written messages greatly influences relationships, both within and beyond the workplace. It is essential to remain attentive to writing style, tone, and the multiple interpretations that messages may generate in order to maintain strong and professional connections. Conscious attention to digital communication ensures that messages are accurately understood, promoting clarity and minimizing misunderstanding (The power of syntax, 2025).

In contemporary digital communication, individuals employ diverse linguistic styles and syntactic variations—including abbreviations, emojis, stickers, and slang—as strategies to convey emotions, thoughts, and sentiments with greater immediacy. Evidence drawn from social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Snapchat indicates that online discourse increasingly departs from the conventions of face-to-face interaction. This shift is often regarded as a form of linguistic creativity, as users are not constrained by prescriptive grammatical or syntactic norms. Digital platforms instead provide a wide array of expressive resources, enabling communicators to construct meaning with considerable flexibility beyond the boundaries of traditional English grammar (Naseer & Ahmed, 2025).

The growth of digital communication tools, including social media, messaging applications, and email, has significantly influenced the way syntax is applied in daily interactions. These platforms encourage concise and informal expression, giving rise to new syntactic styles and norms. As the system that organizes words and phrases into meaningful sentences, syntax remains essential for ensuring that communication is grammatically accurate, understandable, and effective (The role of syntax, 2025).

Advancements in technology have enabled educators to design more dynamic and effective learning environments that address the varying needs of students. As digital resources continue to evolve, the teaching of syntax also develops, providing learners with innovative ways to strengthen language skills in an interconnected world (Fadilla et al., 2024).

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), also known as systemic functional grammar, systemic linguistics, or Hallidayan linguistics, focuses on the relationship between language and its functions in social contexts. Rather than treating grammar as a fixed set of rules, it views language as a resource for creating meaning, emphasizing the interplay between form and meaning (Nordquist, 2025). Developed by Halliday (1994), SFL explains language as a social semiotic system in which syntax is examined not only structurally but also in relation to meaning. It underscores the need to interpret language within its social context, where utterances and texts gain significance through their communicative functions (Katawazai et al., 2021).

Within this framework, the linguistic system consists of three main strata: semantics (meaning), phonology (sound), and lexicogrammar (including syntax, morphology, and lexis). This holistic approach highlights how SFL accounts for the ways language choices generate meaning in particular contexts.

SFL has been highlighted across different areas of applied linguistics, especially within qualitative research. For instance, Taguchi et al (2021) utilized SFL as an analytical tool to study qualitative interview data, illustrating how it exposes multiple layers of meaning through the linguistic choices made by interviewees in the field of foreign language education. Their findings emphasize that SFL effectively connects syntax with meaning-making, reinforcing its usefulness in uncovering evaluative and interpretive dimensions of discourse.

In the context of syntactic analysis, SFL holds particular importance because it unites both form and function, viewing syntax not simply as structural arrangement but as a means of generating meaning. This makes it especially relevant for examining audience reviews, where sentence structures convey evaluation, stance, and coherence. By applying Halliday's three meta-functions, SFL highlights how clauses represent experiences, judgments, and film-related aspects, how syntactic choices signal stance and engagement, and how sentence patterns shape coherence, emphasis, and persuasiveness. From this perspective, SFL stands as a well-established and academically recognized framework for discourse analysis, providing a strong basis for investigating the syntactic complexity of digital film discourse, including audience reviews.

This study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What syntactic structures are most frequently employed in Letterboxd reviews of *The Conjuring: Last Rites*? (2) In what ways do these structures function to convey evaluation, persuasion, or emotional stance? (3) Furthermore, how does syntax contribute to the organization and overall coherence of audience reviews, thereby shaping their impact?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The corpus for this study consisted of 20 English-language audience reviews of *The Conjuring: Last Rites* collected from Letterboxd. Reviews were selected to represent a range of lengths, from brief one-sentence reactions to extended multi-paragraph critiques, ensuring variation in syntactic complexity. Non-verbal, repetitive, or promotional entries were excluded. Letterboxd was chosen as the data source because it provided authentic, user-generated discourse that captured spontaneous audience engagement. This corpus offered a balanced dataset for examining how syntax functioned in expressing evaluation, persuasion, and emotional stance in digital film reviews. The study aligned with the recommended dataset size for a qualitative study, which ranged from five to 25 participants (Creswell, as cited in Dizon & Gatchalian, 2025).

2.2 Ethical Consideration

This study relied on publicly available reviews from Letterboxd, a platform where users voluntarily shared their opinions on films. To ensure ethical use of data, only reviews that were openly accessible without privacy restrictions were included. Usernames and identifiable information were excluded to protect reviewer anonymity, and excerpts were quoted solely for academic purposes. Since the analysis focused on linguistic features rather than personal identities, the risk of harm to participants was minimal. The study adhered to principles of responsible research by respecting intellectual property, maintaining confidentiality, and using the corpus exclusively for scholarly investigation.

2.3 Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data, the researchers employed Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a framework outlined by Halliday (1994). Central to SFL was the concept of meta-functions, which highlighted that language operated simultaneously on semantic and syntactic levels. Halliday's model outlined three distinct functions through which both spoken and written texts were interpreted: the ideational function, which concerned representation and experience; the interpersonal function, which addressed social and interactive meanings; and the textual function, which organized language into coherent discourse (Katawazai et al., 2021). By applying this framework, the study investigated how syntactic structures in Letterboxd reviews of *The Conjuring: Last Rites* shaped evaluation, persuasion, and coherence.

The researchers were guided by the following steps in the analysis process: (1). Segmentation: Dividing the reviews into clauses and sentences to prepare for functional analysis. (2). Ideational Analysis: Examining clause structures to identify how meanings about experiences and events are expressed. (3). Interpersonal Analysis: Analysing syntactic choices that reflect stance, evaluation, and persuasive intent. (4). Textual Analysis: Investigating how syntax organizes information to achieve coherence and flow in

the reviews. (5). Interpretation: Relating the findings across the three meta-functions (ideational, interpersonal, textual) to explain how syntax shapes meaning and overall impact in audience discourse.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

This chapter presents the findings of the syntactic analysis conducted on selected Letterboxd reviews using the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The analysis focuses on how linguistic structures function within the three meta-functions of language—ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Each section discusses the syntactic realizations observed in the data and interprets how these elements reflect the reviewers’ linguistic choices and communicative intent. Excerpts of the audience reviews analyzed in this study are presented in Appendix A, Figures A1–A20, providing direct reference to the original user-generated content that served as the basis for the analysis.

Table 1 presents the syntactic structures identified in the selected Letterboxd reviews. Each review was segmented into individual sentences and analysed to determine the type of syntactic construction used, such as simple, coordination, or subordination. This table illustrates the structural variety present across the dataset and serves as the basis for interpreting how reviewers organize their ideas and convey meaning through sentence construction.

Table 1: Syntactic structure

Review	Sentence Number	Syntactic Structure
1	1	Simple
	2	Coordination
	3	Simple
2	1	Coordination
3	1	Subordination
4	1	Coordination
	2	Coordination
5	1	Coordination
6	1	Coordination
	2	Simple
7	1	Simple
	2	Coordination
	3	Subordination
8	1	Simple
	2	Subordination
	3	Simple
	4	Simple
9	1	Coordination
	2	Simple
	3	Simple
	4	Subordination
10	1	Simple
	2	Simple
	3	Simple
	4	Simple
11	1	Subordination
	2	Subordination
	3	Simple
12	1	Simple
	2	Simple
	3	Coordination
13	1	Subordination
14	2	Coordination



14	1	Coordination
	2	Simple
	3	Subordination
	4	Simple
	5	Coordination
15	1	Coordination
	2	Coordination
16	1	Coordination
	2	Coordination
17	1	Coordination
	2	Subordination
	3	Subordination
18	1	Coordination
	2	Coordination
	3	Coordination
	4	Simple
19	1	Simple
	2	Simple
	3	Simple
	4	Simple
20	1	Simple
	2	Coordination

The syntactic analysis of twenty (20) Letterboxd reviews of *The Conjuring: Last Rites* revealed a noticeable trend in the types of sentence structures employed by reviewers. Across all samples, simple and coordination structures emerged as the most dominant, while subordination appeared less frequently. This finding suggests that reviewers on social media platforms like Letterboxd tend to favor direct, conversational, and easily digestible sentence constructions when expressing their opinions on films.

Simple sentences appeared consistently throughout the dataset. These constructions convey straightforward judgments and emotional reactions, such as “The Conjuring franchise went out sad” or “It’s better than the last part.” The frequent use of simple structures reflects a tendency among users to communicate evaluations in a clear and unambiguous manner. This aligns with the informal and accessible nature of online film discourse, where brevity and immediacy are valued. The reliance on simple sentences also mirrors the platform’s conversational tone, where users prioritize opinion-sharing over elaborate linguistic complexity.

Coordination was another highly prevalent syntactic pattern. Coordinating conjunctions such as *and*, *but*, and *or* were frequently used to connect clauses or ideas, allowing reviewers to juxtapose contrasting sentiments or expand on descriptions. For instance, in Review 5, the sentence “The Conjuring made me fall in love with the horror genre and it’s sad to see this iconic saga coming to an end but I’m happy that Annabelle is finally retiring” demonstrates how coordination enables the expression of mixed emotions within a single syntactic frame. This structure is especially effective in conveying nuanced personal reactions, which are characteristic of informal online reviews.

The dominance of coordination may also indicate the spontaneous and stream-of-consciousness style of social media writing. Rather than revising for grammatical precision, reviewers appear to prioritize emotional expression, using coordination to string together thoughts as they occur. This syntactic pattern supports the idea that online film discourse is performative and expressive, emphasizing voice and relatability over formal correctness.

Subordination was less common. When used, subordinate clauses typically provided context, justification, or comparison, such as “Out of all the extraordinary paranormal events in this film, the most unbelievable part is that the haunted house has a single portrait of John Wayne” (Review 3). This shows that while some reviewers employed more complex sentence constructions to elaborate on reasoning or highlight contrast, such instances were exceptions rather than the norm. The infrequent use of subordination reflects the platform’s informal communication style, where writers aim for readability and impact rather than syntactic sophistication.

The overall distribution of syntactic structures underscores the informal, expressive, and accessible nature of online review writing. Letterboxd users, who often write for entertainment or social engagement, tend to use simple and coordinate clauses to maintain a conversational tone. The results align with recent computational linguistic findings. Di Marco et al. (2024) observed that social media texts have undergone a “universal reduction in text length, lexical richness, and syntactic complexity,” noting that users increasingly favour shorter and simpler structures for faster communication and accessibility. This trend mirrors the dominance of simple and coordinate sentences in the analysed Letterboxd reviews, suggesting that reviewers adapt their writing style to the informal and rapid-exchange environment characteristic of digital platforms.

Table 2 presents the clause-level syntactic features identified in the selected Letterboxd reviews. Each clause was analysed to determine the linguistic feature present, such as modality, appraisal, or intensification, along with its corresponding sentence type, whether declarative or exclamative. The explanations describe how these linguistic resources function to convey tone, stance, and evaluative meaning in the reviewers’ expressions. This table serves as the basis for discussing how specific syntactic and lexical choices reflect varying degrees of emotion, certainty, and persuasion across the dataset.

Table 2: Specific syntactic and lexical choices

Review	Clause	Identified Feature	Type	Sentence Type	Explanation
1	1	gotta (informal got to)	Modality (obligation)	Declarative	Expresses a personal stance or obligation to tell the truth, signals sincerity and honesty.
	2	no sense	Appraisal (negative evaluation)	Declarative	Gives a negative judgment, expressing confusion or criticism about the movies.
	3	not necessarily	Modality (probability tentativeness)	Declarative	Shows uncertainty or balance, softens the evaluation to sound neutral or fair.
	4	just	Intensifier (down-toner)	Declarative	Reduces intensity, implies mildness or simplicity in reaction.
	5	a lot	Intensifier (amplifier)	Declarative	Boosts positive emotion, showing strong liking toward the actors.
2	1	every single	Intensifier (amplifier)	Declarative	Emphasizes totality and emphasis, stronger suggests everyone, not just a few. creating a critical tone, it applies to
	2	dumbest, worst	Appraisal (negative evaluation)	Declarative	Expresses strong negative judgment, criticizing the characters’ actions; -est forms (superlatives) heighten the intensity of disapproval.
3	1	extraordinary, paranormal	Appraisal (positive descriptive evaluation)	Declarative (introducer phrase)	Sets the tone of evaluation, “extraordinary” and “paranormal” express amazement and wonder.
	2	most unbelievable	Appraisal (negative incredulous evaluation)	Declarative	Expresses judgment and irony, signals that the following event seems absurd or hard to believe.
	3	single	Appraisal (quantitative emphasis)	Declarative	Highlights oddity or humour, the specificity adds evaluative tone.
4	1	ugly, cracked	Appraisal (negative evaluation)	Interrogative Exclamative hybrid	The rhetorical question conveys mockery and disbelief, a strong emotional stance.
	2	great	Appraisal (positive evaluation)	Declarative (quoted speech)	Ironically contrasts with the previous negative appraisal, heightens humour and sarcasm.
	3	may as well (modality), just (intensifier)	Modality Intensifier	Declarative	Adds sarcasm and softens tone, suggests mild obligation humorously.

5	1	fall in love	Appraisal (positive)	Declarative	Expresses positive emotion and enthusiasm toward the film, creating an affective bond with the subject.
	2	sad, iconic	Appraisal (negative positive)	+ Declarative	Combines positive evaluation (iconic) with negative emotion (sad), showing both admiration and regret.
	3	happy, finally	Appraisal (positive), Intensifier (finally)	Declarative	Shows relief and satisfaction, expressing closure through the adverb finally.
	4	hate	Appraisal (negative emotion)	Exclamative (emotionally charged)	Displays strong dislike and emotional intensity, signaling humour or frustration.
6	1	Absolutely	Intensifier Appraisal (negative)	+ Declarative	The intensifier absolutely amplifies the negative evaluation juiceless, strengthening the stance of boredom or disappointment.
	2	could	Modality (probability/ability) Appraisal (negative tone)	+ Declarative	The modal could expresses perception and mild certainty, creating a persuasive tone that invites readers to share the same judgment.
	3	wasn't prepared	Appraisal (surprise/humour)	Exclamative	Communicates shock or amusement informal expressing reaction to an unexpected moment. through phrasing, emotional

7	1	'safest'	Appraisal (evaluative)	Declarative	Evaluates the film's conclusion as cautious or predictable, signalling moderate disapproval.
	2	not	Appraisal (negative)	Declarative	Simple negative evaluation, rejecting high praise.
	3	not	Appraisal (mildly positive)	Declarative	Balances previous critique by softening the negativity, suggesting fairness.
	4	Just	Intensifier (limiting) Appraisal	+ Declarative	Just limits the evaluation to mediocrity, reinforcing neutrality and restraint.
	5	Oh well	Appraisal (resigned emotion)	Declarative	Expresses acceptance or mild disappointment, marking emotional stance.
	6	didn't	Appraisal (comparison, negative allusion)	Declarative	Humorously evaluates the film by contrasting it with a known negative example, creating persuasive solidarity with readers.
8	1	can (modal verb), do no wrong	Modality (certainty/attitude) + Appraisal (positive)	Declarative	The modal can expresses firm belief and admiration, conveying emotional loyalty and strong persuasion.
	2	so, overwhelmingly, beautiful	Intensifiers Appraisal (positive)	+ Declarative	Multiple intensifiers amplify praise, admiration and affection. intensifiers the emotional showing deep
	3	certain comfort, eerie	Appraisal (positive + negative contrast)	Declarative	The mix of comfort and eerie builds emotional depth, balancing warmth with fear to show aesthetic appreciation.
	4	the real	Appraisal (positive authenticity)	Declarative	Constructs authenticity and admiration, reinforcing the actors' credibility and emotional connection.
	5	redefined, actual	Appraisal (positive)	Declarative	Evaluates the actors' impact as transformative and meaningful, strengthening persuasive admiration.
	6	so, very	Intensifiers Appraisal (positive)	+ Declarative	The intensifiers so and very heighten emotional expression, ending the passage with warmth and attachment.

9	1	so many, fun	Intensifier + Appraisal (positive)	Declarative	The phrase intensifies evaluation, enthusiasm and enjoyment. so many positive conveying
	2	just	Intensifier (limiting) + Appraisal (negative)	Declarative	The limiting intensifier just weakens enthusiasm, balancing earlier positivity with mild critique.
	3	meh/okay	Appraisal (neutral to negative)	Declarative	Indicates indifference, disengagement moderate disappointment. emotional showing and
	4	really, happy	Intensifier + Appraisal (positive emotion)	Declarative	Really amplifies the feeling of happiness, expressing appreciation and nostalgia.
	5	missed	Appraisal (affective, positive attachment)	Declarative	Conveys emotional longing and attachment to the character, reinforcing affection.
	6	cheesy, awful	Appraisal (negative)	Declarative	Expresses strong negative evaluation, highlighting disappointment emotional rejection. and
	7	wish	Modality (desire) + Appraisal (mild disappointment)	Declarative	The modal expresses unfulfilled signaling persuasion. verb wish desire and expectation, evaluative
10	1	sad	Appraisal (negative emotion)	Declarative	Evaluates the conclusion of the series negatively, signaling disappointment.
	2	uber boring	Intensifier + Appraisal (negative)	Declarative	The intensifier uber heightens the negative evaluation, emphasizing extreme dullness.
	3	zero aura	Intensifier (absolute negation) + Appraisal (negative)	Declarative	The use of zero intensifies criticism, implying a total lack of energy or atmosphere.
	4	zero rizz	Intensifier (absolute negation) + Appraisal (negative/slang)	Declarative	Zero rizz humorously evaluates charisma, reinforcing the negative tone through informal slang.
	5	would not	Modality (negation of intention) + Appraisal (negative)	Declarative	The modal would not conveys firm disapproval, functioning as persuasive advice to avoid the film.
11	1	major major	Intensifier (booster) + Appraisal (positive)	Declarative (circumstantial clause)	The repetition of major amplifies enthusiasm and self-identification as a devoted fan, establishing interpersonal alignment and credibility as a long-time follower.
	2	perfect	Appraisal (positive evaluation)	Declarative	Expresses strong positive judgment; perfect signals closure and satisfaction, marking affective engagement and approval.
	3	couldn't	Modality (ability/negation) + Appraisal (emotional intensity)	Declarative	The modal couldn't overwhelming reaction and conveys engagement and excitement. negation expresses emotional tension; embodied
	4	tense	Appraisal (affect, negative in tone but positive in experience)	Declarative (dependent clause)	Evaluates the film's tension as an effective emotional trigger; though "tense" has negative semantics, it functions positively in horror discourse to indicate thrill.
	5	very very	Intensifier (booster, repetition) + Appraisal (positive evaluation)	Exclamative (elliptical)	The repeated intensifier very very amplifies praise and emotional satisfaction; the ellipited form adds informality and immediacy.
12	1	better	Appraisal (comparative positive evaluation)	Declarative	Expresses a mildly positive evaluation comparison, improvement maintaining a critical tone. through indicating while

	2	didn't work	Appraisal (negative evaluation)	Declarative	Uses negation to express dissatisfaction, signalling the reviewer's judgment of ineffectiveness.
	3	half-baked, could have been better	Appraisal (negative evaluation) + Modality (possibility)	Declarative	"Half-baked" conveys a strong negative evaluation, while "could have been better" adds modal tentativeness, softening the critique and expressing mild disappointment rather than hostility.
13	1	movie equivalent of eating gas station sushi	Appraisal (negative evaluation through metaphor)	Declarative	The metaphor expresses strong disapproval through vivid comparison, creating an image of discomfort and regret. The syntax encodes judgment indirectly, showing disgust humorously.
	2	might	Modality (probability tentativeness)	Declarative	The modal might softens the statement, acknowledging subjectivity and inviting shared understanding from readers.
	3	if you can understand that feeling, that was me	Modality (conditional) + Appraisal (personal stance)	Declarative (complex)	Expresses personal emotional experience and uses conditional phrasing to align with the reader. The syntax functions interpersonally to build empathy and shared humour.
14	1	Mirror, mirror on the wall	Appraisal	Interrogative (rhetorical question)	The reviewer opens with a playful allusion to the "Snow White" line, turning it into a sarcastic question that functions as a humorous negative evaluation. The rhetorical structure makes the criticism more engaging while softening its bluntness through irony.
	2	Little harsh	Appraisal	Declarative	The clause moderates the previous exaggeration, acknowledging interpersonal balancing fairness. criticism, shows stance, with It humour
	3	Honestly, almost	Modality (tentativeness) + Appraisal (judgment)	Declarative	The adverb Honestly signals stance, while almost encodes tentativeness, softening the self-critique. It reflects openness and engagement with public reception.
	4	truth be told, tepid, feels justified	Appraisal (evaluation + affect)	Declarative	Expresses agreement with public opinion through evaluative lexis (tepid, justified). The phrase truth be told signals sincerity, strengthening the reviewer's authority.
	5	can't decide	Modality (inability) + Appraisal (mixed evaluation)	Declarative (complex)	Uses concessive structure ("Despite...") to balance positive (solid scares, nostalgia) and negative evaluation (can't decide). The modality verb can't encodes limitation and critique, conveying persuasive dissatisfaction.
15	1	exaggerated tales, bullshit artists	Appraisal (negative evaluation)	Declarative	The clause evaluates the film negatively through the phrase "exaggerated tales" and the sarcastic descriptor "bullshit artists." This expresses disbelief and disapproval of the Warrens' story, constructing an irreverent and humorous stance.
	2	not the best nor the worst, sad to see them leave	Appraisal (mixed evaluation + affect)	Declarative	Combines balanced evaluation (not the best nor the worst) with affective stance (sad to see them leave). The clause encodes emotional attachment while maintaining critical distance, achieving an interpersonal tone of bittersweet closure.
16	1	too much, not	Appraisal	Declarative	The evaluative phrases too

		enough	(negative evaluation)	(fragment)	much and not enough express imbalance and dissatisfaction, conveying a clear negative stance about pacing and excitement.
	2	HORRIBLE	Appraisal Intensifier	+ Declarative	The capitalized adjective HORRIBLE intensifies the criticism, expressing strong disapproval and emotional emphasis.
	3	I guess, scary	Modality (tentativeness) Appraisal (evaluation)	+ Interrogative (rhetorical)	The modal phrase I guess conveys uncertainty and irony, while scary expresses a mild positive evaluation through another's reaction.
	4	based on a true story, always gets me	Appraisal (positive affect)	Declarative	Expresses emotional involvement and appreciation for realism. The phrase always gets me signals consistent emotional effect, softening prior criticism.
17	1	Look	Interpersonal marker	Imperative	Functions as a conversational stance marker; invites attention and frames a personal viewpoint.
	2	huge fan	Appraisal (positive)	Declarative	Expresses strong admiration and identification with the series, building personal ethos.
	3	by far the weakest	Appraisal (negative) + Intensifier	Declarative	Provides a clear evaluative stance, contrasting loyalty with disappointment; by far amplifies the negative tone.
	4	even defended	Appraisal (positive self-reference)	Declarative	Shows the reviewer's fairness and authority; even stresses effort and credibility.
	5	dismissed	Appraisal (negative external evaluation)	Declarative (embedded)	Highlights disagreement with general opinion, establishing individual perspective.
	6	for me at least, unique style	Modality (subjectivity) + Appraisal (positive)	Declarative (dependent)	Signals personal judgment; for me at least softens tone, while unique style expresses appreciation.
	7	replicate the magic	Appraisal (positive reference)	Declarative (dependent)	Alludes to nostalgia and high standards set by earlier films.
	8	completely fell flat	Appraisal (negative) Intensifier	+ Declarative	Ends with strong negative evaluation; completely heightens emotional emphasis and finality.
18	1	isn't a bad director by any means	Appraisal (positive softening)	Declarative	A mitigated negative evaluation — implies Chaves has some skill, softening criticism.
	2	just not James Wan	Comparison (negative)	Declarative	Establishes contrast; just minimizes Chaves' stature compared to Wan.
	3	master, squeezing tension out of silence	Appraisal (positive) Metaphor	+ Declarative	Praises Wan's skill vividly, emphasizing mastery and control.
	4	timing... brilliantly	Appraisal (positive) Adverb intensifier	+ Declarative (elliptical)	Continues positive description; brilliantly intensifies approval.
	5	creative camerawork	Appraisal (positive)	Declarative (phrase)	Adds another dimension of praise for Wan's artistry.
	6	leans less on scares and more on style	Contrastive appraisal	Declarative	Highlights stylistic difference comparative phrasing. using
	7	always slickly shot	Appraisal (positive) Intensifier	+ Declarative	Evaluates Chaves' technical quality positively; always signals consistency.

	8	moody camerawork, great cinematography	Appraisal (positive)	Declarative (phrase)	Concludes with praise of Chaves' visual aesthetics despite earlier critique.
19	1	good-ass, lol	Appraisal (positive, informal intensifier)	Declarative	Expresses strong positive evaluation through slang and humour.
	2	whoopin everybody ass, goddamn	Appraisal (intensified negative/chaotic)	Exclamative	Uses exaggerated language and expletive to emphasize chaos and excitement.
	3	actually, decent	Appraisal (moderate positive) + Intensifier	Declarative	"Actually" marks a stance of mild surprise; expresses balanced evaluation.
	4	totally	Modality (certainty) + Intensifier	Declarative	"Totally" shows high certainty and strong agreement with the film's logic.
	5	fuck all that	Appraisal (strong negative, emotional stance)	Exclamative	Expresses emotional rejection, heightening interpersonal force.
20	1	pretty savage	Appraisal (positive, informal intensifier)	Exclamative	Evaluates the film's opening as strong and exciting; pretty softens intensity slightly.
	2	foreshadowing	Appraisal (neutral-descriptive)	Declarative (non-finite)	Describes narrative technique, signaling story depth and connection.
	3	basically	Modality (tentative) + Intensifier	Declarative	"Basically" reduces certainty, showing casual evaluation of plot setup.
	4	Or so they say	Modality (uncertainty)	Declarative (parenthetical)	Adds distance from the claim, signalling doubt or mild scepticism.

The interpersonal analysis of the selected reviews reveals that writers consistently use a combination of modality, appraisal, and intensifiers to convey evaluation, persuasion, and emotional stance. Most of the clauses are declarative, reflecting a factual or assertive tone typical of online reviews where personal opinion is presented as credible judgment. However, exclamative and interrogative elements also appear to enhance emotional impact and draw reader engagement, particularly in humour, sarcasm, or strong evaluative moments. This finding corresponds with [Ta et al. \(2021\)](#), who observed **that persuasive messages tend to be more analytical**, structured, and stylistically deliberate—suggesting that even casual online reviews employ strategic linguistic choices to influence readers' perceptions and emotional responses.

Across the reviews, appraisal emerges as the most dominant resource for expressing stance. Reviewers employ affective, judgmental, and appreciative language such as amazing, sad, boring, awful, and perfect to construct subjective evaluations of the films. Positive appraisals, such as "The Conjuring made me fall in love with the horror genre" or "The romance is so overwhelmingly beautiful," highlight emotional attachment and admiration, reinforcing the interpersonal bond between the reviewer and the film. Negative appraisals, on the other hand, often rely on exaggeration or informal lexis—"HORRIBLE," "uber boring," "bullshit artists"—to dramatize disappointment and inject humour, thereby strengthening persuasive appeal. These evaluative choices not only position the reader to share the writer's perspective but also contribute to the overall expressive tone of online discourse.

Modality further supports persuasion by encoding degrees of certainty, possibility, or obligation. The use of modal verbs such as can, could, might, and would not allow reviewers to negotiate stance and manage their level of commitment to statements. For instance, "I might skip it" and "It could have been better" soften criticism through tentativeness, while "I can totally see why Ed and Lorraine would retire"



conveys firm conviction and emotional alignment with the film’s logic. Modality thus functions as a subtle means of interpersonal negotiation, balancing objectivity with personal emotion and credibility.

Intensifiers play a crucial role in amplifying affect and persuasion. Words such as absolutely, very, so, totally, and major major heighten the emotional tone of appraisals. Repetition and slang-based boosters—“very very well done,” “good-ass time,” “uber boring”—intensify both positive and negative evaluations, lending authenticity and expressiveness to the reviewers’ voices. In contrast, limiting intensifiers like just and not necessarily reduce force, signalling neutrality or softening critique. These variations demonstrate the reviewers’ ability to control interpersonal impact through subtle linguistic scaling.

In terms of sentence types, the data show that declarative clauses dominate, indicating a preference for direct, opinion-based statements that project authority and confidence. However, exclamative and rhetorical interrogative constructions appear strategically to express heightened emotion or sarcasm. Examples such as “Who the fuck looks at an ugly ass cracked mirror?” and “So good!!!” exhibit informal expressivity and create a conversational, emotionally charged tone. The alternation between factual and exclamative structures contributes to rhythm, humour, and emphasis in the reviews, mirroring the spontaneity of digital commentary.

Overall, the interpersonal analysis demonstrates that the reviewers’ linguistic choices are deeply evaluative and strategically persuasive. Through appraisal, modality, and intensifiers, they encode affective stances that invite readers to share emotional alignment—whether admiration, disappointment, or humor. The predominance of declaratives underscores confidence and personal authority, while exclamatives and rhetorical questions inject vitality and relational closeness. Collectively, these syntactic and lexical features highlight how interpersonal meaning in online reviews operates not only to judge cinematic quality but also to construct identity, engagement, and shared sentiment within the discourse community of film audiences. Table 3 presents the results of the thematic and information structure analysis of the selected Letterboxed reviews. Each clause was examined to identify its Theme and Rheme components, as well as the type of Theme used—Topical, Textual, or Interpersonal. The table also shows the patterns of thematic progression, including Constant, Linear, and Derived, which indicate how ideas are developed across clauses. This table serves as the basis for discussing how reviewers organize their messages syntactically to create coherence, emphasis, and engagement in their film commentaries.

Table 3: The patterns of thematic progression

Review	Clause	Theme	Rheme	Theme Type	Thematic Patterns
1	1	I	Gotta be honest	Topical	Derived
	2	these movies	make no sense to me	Topical	
	3	(It's)	Not necessarily a bad or good thing	Topical	
	4	I	just nod my head in agreement	Topical	
	5	because I	like the actors on the screen a lot	Textual	
2	1	Every single person in this film	has a moment	Topical	Constant
	2	Where they	Do the dumbest thing at the worst time	Textual	
3	1	Out of all the extraordinary paranormal events in this film		Topical	Constant
	2	the most unbelievable part	is that...	Topical	
	3	the haunted house	has a single portrait of John Wayne hung on the basement wall near the laundry drier	Topical	

4	1	Who the fuck	looks at an ugly ass cracked mirror at the swap meet	Topical	Linear
	2	...and says, "this would be a great gift for my grandchild."		Textual	
	3	At that point, you	may as well just knit them a sweater or something.	Textual	
5	1	The Conjuring	made me fall in love with the horror genre	Topical	Derived
	2	And it's	sad to see this iconic saga coming to an end	Textual	

	3	But I'm	happy that Annabelle is finally retiring	Textual	
	4	I	Hate that bitch	Topical	
6	1	Absolutely juiceless		Interpersonal	Derived
	2	(I)	could feel the audience dozing off like halfway into this	Topical	
	3	(I)	Wasn't prepared for a John Wayne jumpscare.	Topical	
7	1	The "safest" way to end a horror franchise.		Topical	Constant
	2	Not amazing		Interpersonal	
	3	not horrendous...		Interpersonal	
	4	just, safe		Interpersonal	
	5	Oh well,		Interpersonal	
	6	at least they	Didn't pull a David Gordon Green	Textual	
8	1	The Conjuring movies	can do no wrong in my eyes	Topical	Constant
	2	the romance	is so overwhelmingly beautiful that there's a certain comfort even during the eerie scenes.	Topical	
	3	That there's	A certain comfort even during the	Textual	

			eerie scenes		
	4	patrick and vera	are the real ed and lorraine	Topical	
	5	they	redefined the whole story	Topical	
9	6	And (they)	Made it so very special	Textual	Derived
	1	There were	so many fun times watching this	Topical	
	2	but others	just weren't	Textual	
	3	The ending	was meh/okay for me	Topical	

	4	I	really am happy they brought back Annabelle here	Topical	
	5	(I)	missed her	Topical	
	6	The romance parts	were cheesy and awful	Topical	
	7	plus I	wish we had more moments of the evil spirits	Textual	
10	1	The Conjuring franchise	Went out sad	Topical	Linear
	2	The Conjuring: Last Rites	Is uber boring	Topical	
	3	(It)	(Has) Zero aura	Topical	
	4	(And it)	(Has) Zero rizz	Textual	
	5	(I)	Would not recommend	Topical	
11	1	As someone who's been a major major insidious/conjuring fan since		Interpersonal	Derived

			the beginning		
	2	I	Felt that this was the perfect send off	Topical	
	3	I	Couldn't sit still during the last hour	Topical	
	4	because of how tense it got		Textual	
	5	Very very well done		Interpersonal	
12	1	It	is better than the last part	Topical	Derived
	2	Most of the jumpscars didn't work		topical	
	3	The ending	felt half-baked	Topical	
	4	And (it)	Could have been better	Textual	
13	1	This	Is the equivalent of eating gas station sushi at your local fishing pier	Topical	Constant
	2	That	might only make sense to me	Topical	
	3	But if you	can understand that feeling	Textual	
	4	That	was me during this	Topical	
14	1	Mirror mirror	on the wall	Topical	Derived
	2	What's the most redundant sequel of them all?		Topical	
	3	Okay, that's	a little harsh	Topical	

	4	honestly, given the lukewarm reception this one got		Interpersonal	
	5	I	Almost skipped it	Topical	
	6	And truth	be told	Textual	
	7	The tepid response	Feels justified	Topical	
	8	Despite some solid scares a		Topical	
	9	and a sprinkle of nostalgia		Topical	
	10	The movie	Can't decide which story it wants to tell	Topical	
15	1	The final entry in the series based on the exaggerated tales of everyone's favourite bullshit artists	The Warren's	Topical	Derived
	2	(It's)	Not the best	Topical	
	3	Nor (it's)	The worst	Textual	
	4	But i	Can't say I'm not sad to see them leave	Textual	
16	1	(There is)	Too much tension	Topical	Derived
	2	(There is)	not enough action	Topical	
	3	And the CGI	Was horrible	Textual	
	4	But my sister	Was shitting her pants	Textual	
	5	So I	Guess it's scary?	Textual	
	6	And the fact that it's based on true story	Always gets me	Textual	
17	1	Look, I'm	a huge fan of The Conjuring movies	Topical	Linear
	2	But Last Rites	Is by far the weakest entry	Textual	
	3	I	Even defended the third film, The Devil Made Me Do It	Topical	
	4	Which many people	Dismissed	Textual	
	5	Because for me at least The Devil Made It	Had its own unique style	Textual	
	6	This time, when they	Tried to replicate the magic of the first two films	Textual	
	7	It	Completely fell flat	Topical	
18	1	Michael Chaves	isn't a bad director by any means	Topical	Constant
	2	He's	Just not James Wan	Topical	
	3	James Wan	Is a master of squeezing tension out of silence a	Topical	

	4	and timing his jumpscare brilliantly...		Textual	
	5	along with creative camerawork		Textual	
	6	Michael Chaves,	On the other hand, leans less on scares and more on style	Topical	

	7	and more on style.		Textual	
	8	His films	Are always slickly shot,	Topical	
	9	with moody camerawork		Textual	
	10	and great cinematography		Textual	
19	1	This	Was a good- ass time lol	Topical	Derived
	2	The demons in the movie	Was whoopin everybody ass goddamn!	Topical	
	3	I actually thought this	Was as decent as the first one	interpersonal	
	4	I	Can totally see why Ed and Lorraine would retire	Topical	
	5	because fuck all of that		Textual	
20	1	Starts off	pretty savage with its opening	Topical	constant
	2	Foreshadowing	the ties this spirit has to the Warrens	Topical	
	3	And that	Basically sets up out final installment	Textual	
	4	Or so they	Say	Textual	

The Theme–Rheme analysis of the twenty reviews reveals that the majority of clauses begin with topical themes, while textual and interpersonal themes occur less frequently. This pattern indicates that most reviewers prefer to start their sentences with the main topic or participant, such as The Conjuring, I, or the movie, which creates a clear and straightforward flow of ideas. The use of textual themes (e.g., and, but, because) primarily serves to connect opinions and maintain continuity between clauses, while interpersonal themes (e.g., honestly, look, oh well) appear in more personal or emotional reviews, reflecting the subjective and informal tone typical of online film commentary.

In Textual analysis, cohesion refers to how words, phrases, or clauses are linked together in a text through grammatical and lexical connections. This linkage allows the reviews to come together semantically and grammatically, making them easier for readers to comprehend without confusion. The cohesive devices (e.g., reference, conjunction, ellipsis, lexical cohesion) used in these reviews are mostly references (e.g., person–they, grandchild–them, Annabelle–that bitch) and conjunctions (e.g., because, but, and, which). The presence of these devices helps make the flow of information smoother and more linear. In terms of thematic progression, the analysis shows a dominance of topical and constant patterns, where the same theme or subject is carried across clauses. This structure contributes to coherence and helps maintain focus on the film being reviewed. A smaller number of reviews display linear and derived patterns, where the rheme of one clause becomes the theme of the next or where multiple related themes develop from a broader topic. These progressions create a sense of logical flow and narrative movement within the reviews.

Overall, the findings suggest that Letterboxd reviewers use relatively simple yet cohesive thematic structures. The frequent use of topical and textual themes indicates a preference for direct and connected sentence structures, while the presence of interpersonal themes adds subjectivity and engagement. The mixture of constant and derived progressions also shows how reviewers blend syntactic coherence with



personal expression, resulting in reviews that are conversational yet structurally organized. The findings in a case study, entitled “The Realization of Thematic Progression in Online IELTS Writing Task 2 Samples in an English-Learning Website: A Case Study”, showed that the thematic progression is a factor that contributes to the coherence and cohesion of the text in the writing task 2 samples, and each structure shows different effects (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). Similarly, this analysis found that the reviews show different effects with each thematic progression.

Table 4 illustrates the information flow patterns identified in the Letterboxd reviews of The Conjuring: Last Rites, categorizing each review as either following the New–Given (opinion–first) or Given–New (background–first) structure.

Table 4: Information flow pattern

Review	Structure
1	New - Given
2	New - Given
3	Given - New
4	New - Given
5	Given - New
6	New - Given
7	New - Given
8	Given - New
9	Given - New
10	New - Given
11	Given - New
12	New - Given
13	New - Given
14	New - Given
15	New - Given
16	New - Given
17	Given - New
18	New - Given
19	Given - New
20	New - Given

The results reveal that the majority of the reviews exhibit a New–Given information flow, while a smaller number follow the Given–New pattern. This indicates that most reviewers tend to begin their comments with new information, often in the form of direct opinions or evaluations, before connecting these to previously known details about the film or its franchise. Such a pattern reflects a spontaneous and expressive writing style that emphasizes personal engagement with the movie rather than structured reasoning.

In contrast, reviews that follow the Given–New sequence demonstrate a more formal and organized flow of ideas. These reviewers often introduce familiar background information first, then proceed to their evaluation or opinion. This structure contributes to greater coherence and logical development.

Overall, the predominance of the New–Given pattern suggests that reviewers on Letterboxd prefer a subjective and conversational style of writing, which aligns with the informal and personal nature of online review platforms. Liu et al. (2018) found in their research on consumer reviews that subjectivity—specifically, the reviewers’ opinions—enhances the persuasiveness and perceived helpfulness of reviews in hedonic contexts.

4. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from this study based on the findings and analysis of data:

- v Simple and coordinated structures are the most frequently used syntactic patterns in the Letterboxd reviews of *The Conjuring: Last Rites*. Most reviewers relied on straightforward sentences to express their opinions clearly, while many also connected ideas through coordination to convey mixed or extended reactions. Subordination appeared only occasionally, indicating that reviewers seldom used complex constructions. Thus, the overall syntactic choices reflect a preference for clarity, immediacy, and conversational tone, showing that users prioritize accessibility over linguistic complexity in their reviews.
- v Syntactic structures in the selected reviews primarily function to convey evaluation, persuasion, and emotional stance through the consistent use of appraisal, modality, and intensifiers. Reviewers frequently rely on declarative clauses to present their opinions as credible judgments, while exclamative and interrogative elements are strategically employed to heighten emotion and draw attention. Appraisal emerges as the main resource for expressing stance, with strongly positive or negative descriptors shaping the reviewer's evaluative position. Modality further supports persuasion by indicating varying degrees of certainty or tentativeness, allowing writers to manage commitment to their claims. Intensifiers amplify emotional tone, strengthening both positive and negative reactions to make evaluations more impactful. Thus, these structures collectively create a persuasive, expressive, and engaging interpersonal style that enables reviewers to communicate their emotional alignment, persuade readers, and establish a distinct voice within the online film discourse.

v Syntax plays a central role in shaping the organization and coherence of audience reviews by guiding how ideas are introduced, linked, and developed. Most clauses begin with topical themes, allowing reviewers to anchor their statements in clear, identifiable subjects and maintain a straightforward flow of information. Textual themes such as *and*, *but*, and *because* help connect opinions smoothly, while occasional interpersonal themes add emotional nuance without disrupting coherence. Cohesive devices, particularly reference and conjunction, further ensure continuity across clauses. Thematic progression patterns—mainly topical and constant—show that reviewers consistently maintain focus on the film, contributing to a coherent and unified commentary. Meanwhile, the predominance of New–Given sequencing reflects a spontaneous, expressive style in which reviewers introduce fresh opinions before linking them to familiar film elements. Together, these syntactic features create reviews that are conversational yet structurally organized, demonstrating that coherence in online film commentary emerges not from complex syntax but from clear thematic structuring and cohesive linkage of ideas.

Considering the results and the limitations of the study, the following are recommended:

- v Expand the corpus by incorporating reviews from a greater variety of films or a larger pool of audience texts. **This would help determine whether the syntactic patterns identified in this study remain consistent across different genres, review styles, and viewer communities, thereby strengthening the general applicability of the findings.**
- v Extend the analysis by examining linguistic elements beyond syntax, such as lexical choices, stance markers, discourse markers, and multimodal features. Including these components would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how evaluative and persuasive meanings are constructed in digital film reviews.
- v Broaden the investigation by comparing reviews from platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, or Reddit. Cross-platform analysis would illuminate how distinct digital environments influence syntactic preferences, coherence strategies, and evaluative expressions in user-generated discourse.

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Appendix

A

Figure A1. Screenshot of Review 1 from Letterboxd



Figure A2. Screenshot of Review 2 from Letterboxd



Figure A3. Screenshot of Review 3 from Letterboxd



Figure A4. Screenshot of Review 4 from Letterboxd



Figure A5. Screenshot of Review 5 from Letterboxd



Figure A6. Screenshot of Review 6 from Letterboxd



Figure A7. Screenshot of Review 7 from Letterboxd



Figure A8. Screenshot of Review 8 from Letterboxd



Figure A9. Screenshot of Review 9 from Letterboxd



Figure A10. Screenshot of Review 10 from Letterboxd



Figure A11. Screenshot of Review 11 from Letterboxd



Figure A12. Screenshot of Review 12 from Letterboxd



Figure A13. Screenshot of Review 13 from Letterboxd



Figure A14. Screenshot of Review 14 from Letterboxd



Figure A15. Screenshot of Review 15 from Letterboxd



Figure A16. Screenshot of Review 16 from Letterboxd



Figure A17. Screenshot of Review 17 from Letterboxd



Figure A18. Screenshot of Review 18 from Letterboxd



Figure A19. Screenshot of Review 19 from Letterboxd



Figure A20. Screenshot of Review 20 from Letterboxd

