

# AppReddit annotation Guidelines

Appraisal theories see emotions as processes rather than as discrete states and focus on the components of these processes, describing the key components of emotion elicitation, intensity and differentiation, i.e., the specific emotion that follows the cognitive evaluation of a given event and its intensity.

The term *appraisal* refers to a spontaneous and effortless assessment of the environment against a set of features, named *appraisal variables*; this assessment, along with changes in action tendencies, behavioral responses and bodily reactions, creates an emotional episode.

## The research work

Our research work is aimed at annotating situations, emotions, and coping strategies expressed in a dataset of 500 autobiographical stories posted on Reddit mutual support groups. This task is organized in three different stage: (1) the identification of the events that are present in each Reddit post (they can be more than one within a single post); (2) the annotation of the agent's appraisal of these events.

## What we're asking you to help for

At the present time, we have already identified the events in each Reddit post (task 1). What we need now is to annotate them. In order to do that we elaborated an annotation model derived from the structure of the emotion system theorized by Roseman.

In Roseman's opinion, emotions are complex structures in which phenomenological, physiological, expressive, behavioral, and emotivational coexist. The author outlined a set of 6 dimensions concerning both the event appraisal characteristics, and the nature of coping mechanisms. These dimensions allow him to infer a taxonomy of whole emotion structures.

Our aim is to annotate the agent's appraisal in Reddit posts referring to 5 of these dimensions. This will lead us to infer, and deepen analyze the coping strategy/ies embodied in a post (task 3).

Please, observe the image below that depicts our annotation platform. In the top part of the page (the one above the grey thick line) there is the text to be evaluated. More specifically, we encounter:

- the post ID into square brackets
- the post title
- the event to be annotated, which is just the bold part of the text. The fact that you need to focus just on the event doesn't mean that you are discouraged to read the whole text. Sometimes it will be necessary to understand the part you have to evaluate. However, always remember that the annotation refers to the single part because a complex autobiographical post could contain a wide variety of emotion structures. If the post coincides with one event all the text will be bold.

In the central part of the page there are the 5 dimensions to be annotated.

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wf] Girlfriend broke up with me two days before my consultation with my neurosurgeon, w  
d I'm going to need brain surgery. The post title and its ID

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meds that make me feel like shit and then all this stuff happened and I feel so fucking lonely. I've realized that I ha  
ice of fair-weather friends, but not one foul-weather friend. I feel so alone. **The event to be annotated is in bold**, while  
other events in the same post are not

- Is the event expected? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4
- Is it certain? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4
- Is its motive consistent? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4
- Does the agent have control on the situation? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4
- Who is responsible for the event? ☐ self ☐ other ☐ both

skip

submit

## The annotation task

For this task you are asked to annotate the 5 dimensions of appraisal in Reddit posts, and titles (if the title expresses an event).

Four of them are to be annotated in a scale between 1 and 4:

- 1 = very low
- 2 = low
- 3 = high
- 4 = very high

Each post you have to annotate must be considered as a narrative, and most of all are autobiographical narratives. This is crucial to understand two basic principles:

- you have to assume the point of view of the narrator;
- you must focus on how the narrator evaluates the event that impact on her/his life

In some cases the post coincides with one event and the task is relatively easy.

Instead, when you find a post structured in multiple events you have to think of it as a short narrative with a basic plot. In these cases, different appraisal situations could coexist in a single post and together they form a complex autobiographical narrative. For instance, two events are temporally chained together to highlight a change of state happened to the narrator (eg: he/she was depressed, now he/she overcome depression). Thus when you annotate:

- first read the entire post to have an overall picture of the whole narrative;
- then come back to the event in bold, and annotate it by assuming the narrator's point of view on the event.

Please don't try to summarize the general story according to your point of view, and try to use this summarization to interpret single events. They are part of a chain, but you have to consider it in their independence because the author arranged it in a particular way that we want to understand.

## How to deal with the title

Many Reddit posts have a title that expresses an event. Thus, before you start annotating the post, the annotation platform asks you if there is an event in the title.

If yes, you select "yes" and annotate it as if it was part of the post.

If no, you select "no" and submit the annotation.

In the following section we look at each dimension of appraisal individually

## Appraisal-related dimensions

Was the event expected? [1-4]

Expectedness is about how the event took the narrator unaware. In fact, this dimension is introduced by Roseman to explain why people freeze when they face particular situations. The emotion related to expectedness is surprise.

An event can be expected in different degrees. For instance, if the narrator is driving back home in the complete respect of traffic rules, the event of being hit by another car will be perceived as highly unexpected. Otherwise, if he/she is usual to run traffic lights, the event's expectedness will be greater.

This dimension could be also marked as **NA (not applicable)** because it is related only with past events. Indeed, nothing that hasn't happened yet could take a person unaware. In this sense **do not think** of expectedness as something related to the expectation of an individual for a given event to happen. Expectations are instead linked with the dimension of certainty..

Look at this example:

"I am sure that even this time **I will fail to enter in the football team**"

In this case you must mark the expectedness dimension as NA, because the event (in bold) has not happened yet. On the contrary, you can state there is a high degree of certainty in this post because the narrator is certain about this future event to occur.

### Is it certain? [1-4]

Not every event should have been occurred to be appraised. I could wait for a promotion or for my favorite team to win the NBA. Thus, certainty is about an individual that appraises an event that's not happened yet or he doesn't know whether it's happened or not.

Even if at first sight, the annotation of this dimension appears to be straightforward, there are several possible configurations.

- Events in the past that are not certain. The phrase: "I'm not sure I did a good job" refers to a past action, but the event here is not doing a job, but doing a good job. So, the individual is not certain about it. These instances could be annotated as 2.
- Events in the past that are certain. The event "my girlfriend broke up with me" is completely certain. These instances could be annotated as 4.
- Present and future events that are completely uncertain. The event "I hope we will come back together" is objectively uncertain because it has not happened yet. These instances could be annotated as 1.
- Present and future events that are quite certain. There are however events not yet happened that are perceived with a high degree of certainty. For instance, "Tomorrow I'm going up for brain surgery". These instances could be annotated as 3.

### Is it motive consistent? [1-4] where 1 is completely not consistent

An event could be consistent with an agent's objective or not. A pleasant situation is consistent, as long as some event that is coherent with our expectation (eg: a promotion, a trip, a new relation).

### Does the agent have control over the situation? [1-4] where 1 is the lowest control

An agent perceives to have a low or high control of an event.

- The lowest control events are the ones which can't be objectively influenced by an agent (the death of a relative, a disease). These have to be annotated with 1.
- esempio la ragazza mi ha lasciato = control 2
- Other low control events are about events in the future introduced by verbs of probability (I hope, I wish, I desire). These could be marked with 2.
- Sometimes you can find strong statements about the future made by the individual (eg: I know I will quit smoking forever). In these cases you again need to follow the narrator point of view. If he's sure about it, it means that he has control on the situation.

### Who is responsible for this event? [self/other/both]

This dimension refers to the responsibility of an event. The focus of this dimension is the attribution of responsibility.

- If the narrator thinks that he is the cause of the event mark the "self" option.
- If on the contrary the cause is identified as external you have to annotate it as other. Pay attention, other could refers both to animated agents (somebody that yells

against the narrator, a dog that bite him) or inanimate entities (a disease, a flood, a car crash)

- If you find that there is a mutual responsibility for the event, mark “both”.

### How to manage with off topic

Even if we made a pre-annotation in order to split Reddit posts into single appraised events, it is possible to find some off topic. In other words, you can encounter some phrases that are not related to an emotion nor an appraisal. In these cases you have to copy the sequence of letters into the square brackets (e.g.: [qawwf]) at the beginning of the title, and paste it in the comment box. Then you press skip.

### How to manage with purely pragmatic sentences

Sometimes you can face some purely pragmatic sentences, such as the ones in which the narrator seeks for help (eg: please guys help me to deal with it). These are not events. So you have to write “coping” in the comment box and press skip

### Confidence

The last part of the annotation does not concern the event but your confidence about the decision you made. You have to choose between 1 (the lowest confidence) and 4 (the highest)

## Example

title: [qawwf] Girlfriend broke up with me two days before my consultation with my neurosurgeon, where I found I'm going to need brain surgery.

**I'm on meds that make me feel like shit and then all this stuff happened and I feel so fucking lonely.** I've realized that I have an abundance of fair-weather friends, but not one foul-weather friend. I feel so alone.

In this case the event is **the agent's girlfriend who broke up with him**,

- A one-sided decision is unexpected.
- It's happened so it's certain
- The agent "feel like shit", so It is not motive consistent
- the agent cannot have low control over the situation
- the agent is trying to minimize the punishment letting off steam (even if there is not a clear manifestation of coping here).
- In this case the responsible for the situation is his girlfriend.

title: [qawwf] Girlfriend broke up with me two days before my consultation with my neurosurgeon, where I found I'm going to need brain surgery.

I'm on meds that make me feel like shit and then all this stuff happened and I feel so fucking lonely. **I've realized that I have an abundance of fair-weather friends, but not one foul-weather friend. I feel so alone.**

In this case the event is **the agent that has been abandoned by his friends**,

- To Be abandoned is an unexpected event.
- It's happened so it's certain.
- Being abandoned is probably never consistent with an agent's plan.
- The agent has low control over the situation. Indeed, from his words it seems he can't change his friends' behavior.
- In this case the people responsible for the situation are his friends .