

REGISTER CATEGORIES (FIELD, TENOR, MODE) OF THE TEXT

Hieronimus Canggung Darong

Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus

correspondence: hieronimusdarong@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v25i2.4724>

received 6 June 2022; accepted 7 October 2022

Abstract

This study is concerned with the employment of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory in analyzing a speech text. The selected text was reconstructed into some clauses and sentences and subsequently was analyzed in terms of its field, tenor, and mode. The results of the analysis have shown that the register category of the field of the text is the action of America's change. The tenor as the realization of the interpersonal meaning of the text was the establishment of an intimate relationship that enables the orator to gain support from the audience. Meanwhile, the mode of the texts is categorized as spoken mode because the texts make use of simple nominal groups. Further studies need to cope with other ways of examining field, tenor, and mode as proposed by SFL theory.

Keywords: field, mode, SFL, tenor, text

Introduction

Understanding text cannot be obtained solely from the grammatical and lexical constructions building the text, but also from the social context, in which the text is expressed. This means that the meaning of the text is tightly related to the context in which it is produced. Besides, the meaning of the text is also revealed based on how words, phrases, or even clauses are used in the text. Words, phrases, and clauses in question are not only used to refer to things but also have other functions such as highlighting the concern, the creation or confirmation of the relationship between people and their social context, and the mode of the texts.

In practice, there have been many studies regarding the text. For example, the studies focus on the psychological, linguistic, and cognitive aspects of the speaker or writer (Bao, Zhang, Qu, & Feng, 2018; Määttä, Puumala, & Ylikomi, 2021; Navarro, Macnamara, Glucksberg, & Andrew, 2020). Such aspects are beneficial for the message conveyed by the speaker or writer in certain texts. Differently, other studies focused on the approach and framework to reveal the message employed by the writer in a text (Ahmed, 2020; Boch, 2020; Brookes & Mcenery, 2019; Fetzer & Bull, 2012; Schumacher, Hansen, Velden, & Kunst, 2019). The approach and framework distinctively view the text following the goal of the analysis. Meanwhile, other studies were concerned with word choices and performative acts (Bu, Connor-linton, & Wang, 2020; Hopke & Simis, 2016; Horváth, 2017). The word choice and its lexical relation influence the cohesiveness of the text.

In addition to the mentioned studies, following the theory highlighted by Halliday 1985, the structural pattern used in a certain text might determine the mode of the text. In this respect, the construction of the nominal group is an essential element for the mode of the text in question (Andersen, Emilie, & Holsting, 2018; Kelly, 2020; Moragas-fernández, Calvo, & Capdevila, 2018). Focusing on interpersonal relations or intimacy, other studies revealed that the modality is of benefit to controlling the distance and commodity exchange among participants involved in certain speech event intimacy (Ademilokun, 2019; Darong, 2021; Gusthini et al., 2018). As such, the modality used, as confirmed by Halliday and Eggins 1994, significantly contributes to the tenor representing the interpersonal function of the text. However, referring to SFL theory, there are three meta-functions of language namely ideational or experiential function (field), interpersonal function (tenor) and the textual function (mode) (Briones, 2016a, 2016b; Jitpranee, 2018; Lim, 2018; Martin & Zappavigna, 2019; Potter, 2016). The studies in question were concerned only with tenor and mode. Yet, theoretically, the field, tenor, and mode as the realization of the three metafunctions of language exist simultaneously in a text. Therefore, this study extends the previous studies by involving the field as the realization of the ideational function of language by taking a speech text as the sample of analysis.

Methodology

This study belongs to a qualitative design utilizing discourse analysis. A selected ex-US President- first Obama's victory speech text was the datum to analyze. The reason for choosing Obama's victory speech was the consideration of Obama as the first American president who received many awards. This 44th US President has a total of 123 awards nationally and internationally. One of the most prestigious awards he received was the Nobel Peace Prize or Nobel Peace Prize in 2009. Launching the official website of the Nobel Prize, the award was given to Obama because of his extraordinary efforts and dedication to strengthening security diplomacy, (<https://news.okezone.com/read/2022/01/19/18/2534587/2-presiden-as-ini-kantongi-segudang-prestasi-obama-raih-123-penghargaan>). This achievement provoked the researchers to investigate his ideology, efforts, commitment, imagination to his nation and this globe. One way to reveal this is by analyzing one sample of his speech which is his first victory speech representing those features in question. As such, this descriptive qualitative research was used to seek and describe the employment of register categories namely field, tenor, and mode through the structure of language in his speech from which experiential, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning were revealed.

The text was modified into some sentences and clauses from which the text is made up. The modified text was then, analyzed in the context of field, tenor, and mode. To know the field of the texts, the transitivity showing the major process being used and the lexical strings of the text should be analyzed. Meanwhile, tenor which refers to the negotiation of social relationships between the participants (speaker and audience) was examined through the analysis of mood, modality, and pronoun used. Eventually, the mode was revealed to know the channel of communication, whether or not the text is spoken or written, through nominal group analysis. All these ways employed the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics

(Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1985) to unpack the connection between the grammatical system and the social context of the speech text under study.

Findings and Discussion

It should be emphasized that the goal of this analysis was to uncover the register category of field lexical string analysis, tenor (modality), and mode (nominal group analysis). The following tables illustrated respectively the data of such three registers.

Table 1. Lexical string

Number of lexical strings	Total number of lexical relations	The longest String	Lexical string Associate with process types	Rep	Syn	Co-Hyp
39	121	America	Material process	98	20	3

Rep : Repetition

Syn : Synonym

Co-Hyp: Co-hyponymy

There were 39 lexical strings in this speech text. Most of the strings were short ranging from 2 to 4 items. Based on the diagram of the lexical string of this text; there were 14 longer strings consisting of 5 to 15 items. They were string 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 23, 24, 26, 37, and string 38. First, String 1 labeled “anyone” was concerned with those who still wonder about the power of democracy and the power of America. The speaker gave a reflective question to the audience about what and how they feel and should be. This string was, furthermore, followed up by the second string 2 labeled “doubts” which similarly emphasized the same thing to the audience in particular and America in general which was also shown in string 3. It was labeled “America” as the third string. As these questions were delivered, the orator confirmed that there must be an answer that identified with the label “tonight” in string 4 as the fourth.

The fifth longer string was string 9 labeled “tell (told)”. This string consists of 9 items. It has to do with the answer given in the previous strings (Clause 2a, 2e, 3a, 4c). Besides, it is concerned with the honor of the speaker’s partner who spoke out for the victory (clause 11b, 11c) and the power of history in the past (Clause 59b, 63c, 64d, 69b). Meanwhile, the sixth longer string was string 10 which was labeled “achieve”. This sixth string bears 6 items dealing with the achievement in the past, present, and tomorrow of America. It was also an appreciation of Governor Palin’s achievement and an honor to be appreciated by the speaker (Clause 10b). In addition, it emphasized a personal appreciation for the speaker’s family relating to his victory. The seventh string was string 29 labeled “do (did)”. It refers to the actions conducted by Americans, used to be, at present, and in the future. In some other parts of the text, it was found that there were 5 items of the use of the word “change” that, in turn, in this analysis are put as the eighth string. This is the mission of the speaker four years ahead of his leadership.

The ninth string is considered as a long string is string 14 labeled “receive”. It has to do with an appreciation of what has been achieved by his opponent and a fraternity (Clause 6). It moreover, is regarded as an honor of him, for the hard work of his team (Clause 19f) and a great expectation in the future under his power

(Clause 34a, 34c, and 35b). Then, the tenth was a string labeled “watch(ing)”. This string bears 8 items. It is about the speaker’s personal feelings toward his grandmother that already passed away (Clause 14b, 52a), the symbol of changes that are metaphorically described in the figure of Ann Copper (Clause 64c, 65b, 67d, 75, 77c, and 78). The eleventh longer string was string 24 labeled “make/made”. It bears 6 items and was concerned with the speaker’s personal honor to his family and his team that made him who he is (Clause 14b, 19c). It also has to do with his plans and attitude toward the differences (Clause 25e, 37c) and concerns with the change (Clause 52a, 64c, 65b, 67d, 75, 77c, and 78).

The twelfth string is string 26 labeled “know”. It bears 7 items and has to do with the speaker’s consciousness toward his personal and professional life as a newly elected President of the US. His appreciation is regarded as to the contribution of his family in his victory and professional commitment toward the challenges and change of America in the four years ahead. The thirteenth string is string 37 labeled “those” referring to Americans. Eventually, the last longer string is string 38 labeled “Ann Cooper”. It refers to the old woman in the past. It is intentionally introduced by the speaker for the sake of change in America.

It is important to note that the longest string was string 3 labeled “America”. It bears 15 items. However, there are still many other short strings that were found somewhere around in this text. Those strings are ranged from 2 to 4 items. They are string 5 labeled “answer”. It bears 4 items and has to do with the string 1 and 2 about the reflective questions given to the audience and those who were watching and hearing the speaker’s victory speech. String 7, 8, and 9 were concerned with those who commit and surely trust to the existence of democracy as well as the change of America no matter the differences are and will be. The differences are strongly assembled in one sense of being united by the states. The sound is quite similar to the value carried out in string 13. It is labeled with “come” and refers to the change in America. Another Other short string found in this text was string 15, labeled “Senator McCain”, the opponent in the election. The speaker raised him as a brave and selfless leader regardless of being foe as the campaign did. His honor was further proven in string 17 labeled “congratulate”. It refers to the speaker’s attitude and appreciation of the equal right as a citizen and being successful in political chance. On the other side, the speaker also was concerned with the hands that goes with him in the campaign by saying thanks (String 18 labeled “thank” and bearing 2 items), particularly the elected vice President Joe Biden (String 19 labeled “my partner” bearing 3 items). String 20, labeled “New Puppy” refers to the speaker himself. It bears 3 items. String 21, labeled “look forward” consists of 2 items. It refers to the speaker’s expectation to work with and a commitment to go hand in hand with the change.

The other strings that were closely related to each other were string 22 labeled “grow up”, string 25, labeled “grateful”, string 27, labeled “built”, string 28, labeled “this victory”, string 29, labeled, “working man and woman”, string 30, labeled “young people”, string 31, labeled “not so young people” and string 33 labeled “happen”. Each of them has different numbers in terms of items, that is 3, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 2, and 2. All of them were concerned with how the speaker got a great victory in the election. It is quite different from strings 34, 35, and 36 bearings respectively 2, 3, and 2 items. The labeled word “remember”, “have” and “a man” refers to the request of the speaker to remind the challenges which already and will

probably appear in the past and some years ahead (Clause 46a). It was also about the values that are undergone by America both contributed by the Republic as well as the Democratic Party. These values must be shared by all American regardless of the differences they have. Finally, the last short string found in the text is string 39 consisting of 3 items. It is labeled “restore”. It has to do with the request of the speaker to all Americans for the sake of restoration of the economy, peace, and security as well.

By and large, the lexical string analysis of the texts under study clearly shows that the text mostly consists of short lexical strings confirming the main concern of the text, that is, America (change) as the field of the text. As highlighted by SFL theory (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1985), one way to determine what is being talked about in certain texts is the lexical writing utilized by the writer. In this context, America is the longest string which then, is regarded as the concern or what is being talked about in the speech text.

Table 2. Mood, modality, and Pronoun analysis

Mood		Number
Total Clause		246
Declarative	N	239
	P	97.15%
Imperative	N	5
	P	2.03%
Interrogative	N	2
	P	0.81%
Modality		
Will		18
Must		4
Can		22
May		2
Should		-
Be going to		-
Pronoun		
I		26
We		45
You		14
N	: Number	
P	: Percentage	

Regarding the data in Table 2, the declarative clause is the most used in terms of frequency. The dominance of declarative in the text indicates that the text focuses on giving information. A political speech, as a dilly carrying on a political mission, is vital and apparent for the addresser to give information and demand services. On one hand, the addresser hopes to offer certain messages to the audience showing his political attitude and assumption. On the other hand, the orator tries to demand and arouse the audience to take action to follow his or her ideology. Therefore, complete declarative clauses generally dominate in political speech. As such, a negotiation of commodity exchange through declarative clauses appears as the orator’s strategy. This is in line with the previous study revealing that there is a negotiation of the text focus which, in turn, is considered a proposition employing an extensive demonstration of declarative statements used (Roy Randy Y. Briones, 2016).

Concerning the number of modalities, it indicates that “will” is mostly used in both texts. It indicates that the text is concerned with the strong expectation and toughness of the speaker to do the actions involving plans and promises for America’s future. The use of “Must” is regarded as the pressure of command and shows Obama’s firm determination to reach the goal. In the meantime, the use of “Can” conveys a belief and encouragement of Obama and Americans to believe in themselves and do everything for America. Both refer to the power of togetherness to go to the bright future of America. Obama involves the audience or Americans in their text. It is considered a strategy of keeping a close distance between Obama as the orator and the audience (tenor). By and large, the use of modalities such as will, can, must, and may found in the text is regarded as a discourse move to keep the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and audience. This reflects the findings which highlight the modality aspect and its functions in intimacy. In this regard, modality is of benefit to controlling the distance of the participants involved in certain speech events (Ademilokun, 2019; Gusthini et al., 2018).

Table 3. Nominal Group Analysis

No	Pattern	Total
1	T	166
2	DT	102
3	ET	7
4	NT	11
5	CT	3
6	TQ	7
7	DTQ	39
8	DET	8
9	DCT	6
10	ETQ	1
11	NDT	1
12	NTQ	4
13	DNT	1
14	NTE	2
15	NTNT	1
16	DETQ	11
17	DCTQ	3
18	DECT	2
19	TQQQ	1
20	DTQQ	4
21	DCTQQ	2
22	DEEDT	1
23	DETQQ	1
24	DETQQQ	1

The analysis of the nominal groups of the text shows that most nominal groups of the text are categorized as one-word nominal groups. It is supported by the fact that the one-word nominal group bears 166 in number. It consists of the most number among other types of nominal groups found. These one-word nominal groups are represented by the central Thing (T element) which appears in the number in question. Furthermore, the use of the nominal groups mostly has to do with the participants both human and non-human. In the meantime, concerning the

modifiers used to modify the T element, that of one-word nominal groups, other nominal groups are constituting mostly one modifier. These nominal groups are realized through the structural pattern of 3 pre- modifiers and 1 post- modifier; DT (102), ET (7), NT (11), CT (3), and TQ (7). The last (TQ) is regarded as the use of a qualifier whose clause modifies the T.

It should be kept in mind that the use of Q is to give a further definition of the T element both by phrase and clause, (Halliday, 1985). For example in clause 4a, [[those who have been told]]. All TQ patterns use clauses as modifiers. Besides, other nominal groups in the text can be differentiated based on the types and number of modifiers. They are used to extend the head nouns (T elements) and are represented by those consisting of two words. These nominal groups are pre-post-modifier as illustrated in the structural pattern DTQ (39), DET (8), DCT (6), ETQ (1), NDT (1), NTQ (4), and DNT (1). The DTQ structural pattern is mostly concerned with the use of qualifiers in which the phrase modifies the T element (head of the noun) except in clauses 4a, 11b, 60, 63d, 64a, a69b, and 4a. The structural pattern of ETQ found in clause 24 a, does not use the phrase but clause as a qualifier. In the meantime, the structural pattern of NTQ as found in clause 40b is similar to those of other DTQs.

Other types of nominal groups found are longer than other nominal groups previously mentioned. These types are expanded by three to five classifiers and constructed in the structural pattern of NTNT, DETQ, DCTQ, DECQ, DECT, TQQQ, DTQQ, DCTQQ, DEEDT, DETQQ, DETQQQ. From the constructions in which modifier appears, most of them constitute clauses as modifiers which in turn are considered as qualifiers except for the structural pattern of DCTQ and DETQ in a few clauses (3d, 44, 52e, 55d, 56a, 65c, and 83c). As such, all of them belong to the phrase of qualifier as the modifier.

Hitherto, most of the nominal groups are simply consisting of a central thing (T element) or bearing one or two pre or post-modifiers. However, there are still several complex nominal groups. It is because their length covers more than two pre- or post-modifiers. Besides, they are considered complex because of using both phrases and clauses as qualifiers in addition to having modifiers, which can be in the forms of classifiers, epithets, and numeric. Such complex nominal groups of the text are not only because of the length of the structural pattern but also of the use of lexical items constituting phrases and clauses as well.

Since the most nominal groups found in the text are simple, the text under study belongs to the spoken mode. It is due to the use of simple nominal groups consisting of the head noun or T element only and the ones involving the use of one or two simple modifiers making up each text. This corroborates the previous study saying that the simple word choices and clause constructions are of benefit to the spoken mode of the text (Andersen et al., 2018).

Conclusion

The race to become president of the U.S. is a long and demanding one. There is always a great deal of enthusiasm and exhilaration surrounding the candidates, but sometimes there are candidates that seem to attract more attention than others, contestants that seem to shine brighter than the others. It is not only because he is really of himself (being a model) but also due to the language used in his political speech text touching the attention of the audiences Language function through

words, phrases, and clauses construction play important roles in the promotion of desired philosophies as well as ideology.

Based on the results of the analysis, the lexical string of the speech text is mostly short. The longest string confirmed and support the main concern of the text, that is, America. As such, the field of the texts under study is about the activities done by the speaker, audience, and other participants for America's progress. Meanwhile, the tenor of the text is concerned with the efforts to keep a close relationship with the audience. The intimacy is close utilizing the modality used in the text. Ultimately, the mode of the text belongs to spoken mode as the employment of a simple nominal group by the orator.

Viewed from SFL theory, there are many ways to reveal the field, tenor, and mode of a text such as transitivity, reference, pronoun, and mood structure analysis. Further studies might be more challenging and interesting to cope with those ways in question and relate them in the context of the teaching-learning process.

References

- Ademilokun, M. (2019). Corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis of modality in social transformation campaigns in Nigeria. *Discourse and Interaction*, 12(2), 5–28. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5817/DI2019-2-5>
- Ahmed, Y. (2020). Political discourse analysis: A decolonial approach. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 18(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2020.1755707>
- Andersen, T. H., Emilie, A., & Holsting, M. (2018). Clause complexing in systemic functional linguistics – towards an alternative description. *Functional Linguistics*, 5(10), 1–25. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1186/s40554-018-0059-7>
- Bao, C., Zhang, X., Qu, Y., & Feng, Z. (2018). American English perfect construction across registers. *Journal of Quantitative Linguistics*, 25(4), 314–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09296174.2017.1387961>
- Boch, A. (2020). Increasing American political tolerance: A framework excluding hate speech. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 6, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023120903959>
- Briones, R. R. Y. (2016a). Textual analysis through systemic functional linguistics. (*JELTL*) *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 1(2), 109–144. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v1i2.27>
- Brookes, G., & Mcenery, T. (2019). The utility of topic modelling for discourse studies: A critical evaluation. *Discourse Studies*, 21(1), 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445618814032>
- Bu, H., Connor-linton, J., & Wang, L. (2020). Linguistic variation in the discourse of corporate annual reports: A multi-dimensional analysis. *Discourse Studies*, 22(6), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445620928231>
- Darong, H. C. (2021). Interpersonal function of Joe Biden's victory speech (systemic functional linguistics view). *Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation Volume*, 5(1), 57–66. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/JERE%0AInterpersonal>
- Eggins, S. (1994). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. London: Pinter.

- Fetzer, A., & Bull, P. (2012). Doing leadership in political speech : Semantic processes and pragmatic inferences. *Discourse & Society*, 23(2), 127–144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926511431510>
- Gusthini, M., Sobarna, C., & Amalia, R. M. (2018). A pragmatic study of speech as an instrument of power: Analysis of the 2016 USA presidential debate. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 5(1), 97–113. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v5i1.6906>
- Halliday, M. A. (1985). *Introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Jitpranee, J. (2018). A study of systemic functional linguistics phenomena in Thailand. *HUNIC*, 1–18.
- Kelly, C. R. (2020). Donald J . Trump and the rhetoric of resentment. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 106(1), 2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2019.1698756>
- Lim, F. V. (2018). Developing a systemic functional approach to teach multimodal literacy. *Functional Linguistics*, 5(13), 1–17. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1186/s40554-018-0066-8>
- Määttä, S. K., Puumala, E., & Ylikomi, R. (2021). Linguistic, psychological and epistemic vulnerability in asylum procedures: An interdisciplinary approach. *Discourse Studies*, 23(1), 46–66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445620942909>
- Martin, J. R., & Zappavigna, M. (2019). Embodied meaning: A systemic functional perspective on paralanguage. *Functional Linguistics*, 6(1), 1–33. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1186/s40554-018-0065-9>
- Moragas-fernández, C. M., Calvo, M. M., & Capdevila, A. (2018). The process en route: The metaphor of the journey as the dominant narrative for the political discourse in Catalonia. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15(5), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2018.1468787>
- Navarro, E., Macnamara, B. N., Glucksberg, S., & Andrew, R. A. (2020). What influences successful communication? An examination of cognitive load and individual differences. *Discourse Processes*, 57(10), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853X.2020.1829936>
- News.okezone. (2022). Retrieved from <https://news.okezone.com/read/2022/01/19/18/2534587/2-presiden-as-ini-kantongi-segudang-prestasi-obama-raih-123-penghargaan>
- Potter, L. (2016). Ideological representations and theme-rheme analysis in English and Arabic news reports: A systemic functional approach. *Functional Linguistics*, 3(5), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40554-016-0028-y>
- Qian, D. D., & Pan, M. (2019). Politeness in business communication: Investigating English modal sequences in Chinese learners ' letter writing. *RELJ Journal*, 50(1), 20–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688217730142>
- Risberg, J., & Lymer, G. (2020). Requests and know-how questions : Initiating instruction in workplace interaction. *Discourse Studies*, 22(6), 753–776. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445620928239>
- Schumacher, G., Hansen, D., Velden, M. A. C. G. Van Der, & Kunst, S. (2019). A new dataset of Dutch and Danish party congress speeches. *Research and Politics*, 6(2), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168019838352>

- Wang, J. (2010). A critical discourse analysis of Barack Obama s speeches. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(3), 254–261. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.1.3.254-261>
- Wang, W. (2020). Grammatical conformity in question-answer sequences: The case of Meiyu in Mandarin conversation. *Discourse Studies*, 22(5), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445620916371>