

# A Discourse Analysis of Interpersonal Metafunction in Donald Trump’s Speech Recognizing Jerusalem as Capital of Israel

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**Abstract—** This study examines the discourse strategies used by Donald Trump in his speech recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. In implementing the analysis, the study employs Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) theoretical framework, specifically interpersonal metafunction elements, to analyze all uses of language in expressing social and personal relations in the speech. Interpersonal metafunction is commonly realized by mood and modality analysis. In Mood analysis, it can be revealed the role of the speaker wanted to be in the speech situation, and also the role the speaker wanted to assign to the hearer. Furthermore, in Modality analysis, it can be revealed not only how the speaker views and thinks to the problem of the speech topic, but also the power relationship and the formality scale between the speaker and the hearer. The results show that the design of Donald Trump’s speech recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital reflects his political intention. It is all shown not only by its interpersonal metafunction discourse strategies he uses but also by its interpersonal meaning he creates in his speech. This is quite understandable since Trump tries to persuade the world that what he did in recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital in his speech is a correct decision, and it does not threaten world peace.

**Keywords—**Discourse Analysis, Interpersonal Metafunction, Trump’s Speech

## I. INTRODUCTION

The present study entitled “A Discourse Analysis of Interpersonal Metafunction in Donald Trump’s Speech Recognizing Jerusalem as Capital of Israel” employs Discourse Analysis (DA) to discover how interpersonal function is realized in Donald Trump’s speech. Speech is chosen as the subject of the study since it consists of interpersonal aspect; not only because speech is delivered verbally which involves a relation between the speaker and the audience but also it is shaped in the form of a well-prepared and a well-structured text. In this case, Trump’s speech is categorized as political speech; therefore, definitely, he either shows his political stance and assumption to the audience or tries to persuade the audience to take action in following his thought and even his instruction [1]. Thus, the analysis of interpersonal metafunction can be applied in the speech; through the analysis, it will discover the way Trump interacts with the audience, especially the language used by him to establish and maintain the social relations with his audience.

Related to the present study, there are some previous pieces of study. First, the study is entitled “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Barack Obama’s Speeches” by Wang. In the study, the writer analyzes a political speech through some of the discourse analysis elements, and one of them is the

interpersonal function elements [2]. However, the results of the study do not cover the interpersonal function elements completely. Second, the study is entitled “Interpersonal Metafunction Analysis of the Representation of Multi-Ethnicity in the Government Endorsed Curriculum 2013 Textbook *When English Rings a Bell for SMP/MTS Kelas VIII*” by Zudianto. He uses a similar theory to the present study, interpersonal metafunction [3]. However, his study involves a sociolinguistic approach, and he uses the interpersonal metafunction to discover a relation between multi-ethnicity and a textbook for Junior High School students.

Furthermore, the present writer has also conducted a study entitled “Media Attention for Jerusalem Declaration: A Comparative Discourse Analysis on International Online Newspapers.” In the study, the present writer uses a similar case to the present study, Donald Trump’s Speech Recognizing Jerusalem as Capital of Israel [4]. However, the data source related to the study is different; if the study uses news headlines about the speech as the source, the present study uses the speech itself as the data source.

Regarding the case of the study, Donald Trump’s speech about the declaration to Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel is chosen as the case focus. The declaration speech has shocked the world since Jerusalem is considered the holy city for three religions: Islam, Jewish, and Christian; and even, the city is still in conflict over territory between Palestinians and Israeli. The declaration speech itself is interesting to investigate since the speech can give a significant impact on the world until today; moreover, how Trump packs his speech and relates his speech with the audiences, which are not only Americans but also world communities is interesting to be discovered.

Therefore, the objectives of the present study are to discover Trump’s language strategies used in the speech to interact with the audience through the interpersonal function analysis and to analyze the strategies realization in the speech through the interpersonal function elements including mood, modality, and their other aspects. In addition, the method applied in the present study is qualitative, and the descriptive method is also used to present the analysis in the discussion.

## II. METHODS

The method applied in the present study is qualitative. Walliman stated, “Qualitative research is research depending on a careful definition of the meaning of words, the development of concepts and variables, and the plotting of interrelationships between these” [5]. In addition, Kothari also stated that qualitative research is “research designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject

or institution” [6]. Related to both quotations above, the present study focuses on how language is used to interact with the audience, in this case by Trump, which is analyzed through the interpersonal metafunction involving the elements of the function, mood and modality.

To implement the method, some attempts are conducted as parts of the process in the present study. One of the attempts is by deciding the speech topic to raise and the main consideration to observe for the present study. The present writer chooses Donald Trump’s speech about the declaration to Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel. In addition, as the present study focuses on the interpersonal metafunction and aspects in the speech, the main consideration and attention to observe is the language used in the speech. Specifically, the language obtained from the speech transcript is divided into clauses; then, the clauses are analyzed through the interpersonal metafunction elements.

The next attempt to conduct is analyzing the clauses through the interpersonal metafunction elements. Halliday stated that “the interpersonal functions play the role of setting up and maintaining social relations and indicate the roles of the participants in the communication” [7]. For that reason, Halliday added that the interpersonal metafunction mainly focuses on the relation between the role of speakers (related to mood element) and the role of the audience (related to modality element). Besides, Halliday also adds the other elements in interpersonal metafunction: the pronoun system and rhythmic features of words as part of the interpersonal function system [8]. Thus, the analysis of mood and modality is the most crucial part of the interpersonal function analysis.

Furthermore, regarding interpersonal metafunction in terms of mood element, Halliday relates it with speech roles. He said that the most fundamental types of speech roles, are just two: (i) **giving** and (ii) **demanding**. Either the speaker is giving something to the listener (a piece of information, for example, as in *Boof keeps scaring me*) or he is demanding something from him (as in *When [has Boof bit you]?*). Giving means ‘inviting to receive and demanding means ‘inviting to give. The speaker is not only doing something himself; he is also requiring something of the listener [9]. To get a clear description Halliday creates a table of basic speech roles, as shown in Table I.

TABLE I. BASIC SPEECH ROLES

Role in Exchange	Commodity Exchanged	
	(a) Goods-&services	(b) Information
(i) giving	‘offer’ Would you like this teapot?	‘statement’ He’s giving her the teapot
(ii)demanding	‘command’ Give me that teapot!	‘question’ What is he giving her?

Table 1 shows that there are four speech functions resulted by the combination of commodity exchanged and role in exchange: statement, question, offer, and command. The speech functions is implemented into four kind of structures, or what Halliday calls ‘Mood Structures’: declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamative. Statement is implemented by the declarative clause, offer and question are implemented by the interrogative and exclamative clauses, and the command is implemented by imperative clause [10].

Beside mood, there is another element in interpersonal metafunction, modality. Halliday stated that modality refers to the areas of meaning that lie between yes and no—the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity. Modality analysis can be implemented to determine the speaker’s interpersonal meaning reflected in his/her speech. Through the analysis, either the speaker’s position, emotion, affirmation, attitude towards his will or the speaker’s estimation and uncertainty to the recognition of things can be revealed.

Fig 1. shows types of modality which can be divided into modalization and modulation [11].

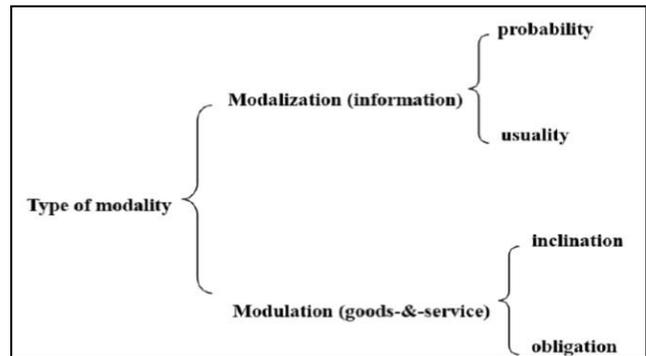


Fig. 1. Types of Modality

From Fig 1 it shows that modalization occurs when language is functioned as a proposition to exchange information; and, it can be either probability or usuality. Besides, modulation occurs when language is functioned as a proposal to exchange goods and services; and it can be either inclination or obligation.

Moreover, Halliday added that there are three values implemented in modality and modal operators: high, median, and low, as shown in Tables II and III [12].

TABLE II. MODALITY VALUES

	Probability	Usuality	Obligation	Inclination
High	certain	always	required	determined
Median	probable	usually	supposed	keen
Low	possible	sometimes	allowed	willing

TABLE III. MODAL OPERATOR VALUES

High	must, ought to, has to, is to
Median	will, would, shall, should
Low	may, might, can, could

In addition, the present study also involves personal pronoun and tense analysis since the analysis can reveal a certain relationship between the speaker and the audience, and it definitely has an interpersonal function in the speech [13].

### III. RESULTS

The results of the present study show the interpersonal elements involved in the analysis which consist of the analysis of mood, modality, and the other aspects of the elements including: tense and personal pronoun analysis. Mood structure analysis can be seen in Table IV.

TABLE IV. ANALYSIS OF MOOD STRUCTURES

Mood Structures	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative
Total Clauses	99	2	-
Percentage	98%	2%	

Trump’s speech consists of 65 sentences and 101 clauses. Table 4 shows that only two types of mood structures used by Trump in his speech: declarative and imperative. Declarative clauses are mostly used by Trump.

In modality analysis, there are 2 elements to analyze: values of modality and values of modal operators. However, in the speech there is no use of modalization and modulation by Trump, so the values of modality analysis are not applied in the study. Therefore, only values of modal operators analysis is applied in the present study as seen in Table V.

TABLE V. ANALYSIS OF MODAL OPERATORS VALUES

Values	Low	Median	High
Total Clauses	1	11	2
Percentage	7.1%	78.6%	14.3%

Trump’s speech consists of 14 verbal operators' use. Table 5 shows that the whole values of the modal operator used by Trump in his speech: low, median, and high. Median verbal operators are mostly used by Trump.

Besides mood and modality analysis, the present study also applies tense. The tense analysis shows the use of tense: present, past, or future tenses in the speech, as seen in Table VI.

TABLE VI. ANALYSIS OF TENSE

Tenses Type	Present	Past	Future
Total Clauses	77	19	5
Percentage	76.2%	18.8%	5%

Trump’s speech consists of 101 clauses. Table 6 shows the whole types of tense used by Trump in his speech: present, past, and future. Present tenses are mostly used by Trump. In addition, personal pronoun analysis is also applied in the present study. The personal pronoun analysis shows the use of the pronoun, as seen in Table VII.

TABLE VII. ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL PRONOUN

Pronoun	First Personal		Second	Third Personal	
	I/me/my	we/us/our	you/your	they/them/their	it/its
	17	19	2	11	8
	29.8%	33.3%	3.5%	19.3%	14.1%

Trump’s speech consists of 57 personal pronouns use. Table 7 shows that the types of pronoun used by Trump in his speech: first, second, and third personal pronouns. First personal pronouns are mostly used by Trump, either in singular or plural forms.

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the results, it is found that Trump has done many strategies in arranging his speech proven by the analysis of the interpersonal metafunction in the present study. In mood structures analysis, from Table 4, it is found that Trump used most declarative clauses in his speech. There is a consideration of why Trump chose this type of mood structure in his speech. Since the speech is a political speech that must be bringing a political mission, it is vital and apparent for Trump to give information and demand services. In this case, Trump hopes to offer certain messages to the audience which shows his political assumption and attitude; in return, he tries to demand and arouse the audience to take action, and even to follow his political will or proposal. Besides, imperative clauses are also used by Trump in his speech [10]. In interpersonal metafunction, there are two types of imperative clauses; first, common imperative which functions to command others to do something, and second, imperative “Let’s” which functions to invite the audience to do or achieve something together. In the speech, Trump used the 2<sup>nd</sup> imperative, as seen in Table VIII:

TABLE VIII. IMPERATIVE CLAUSE “LET’S” IN THE SPEECH

Clause No.	The clause in the speech
93	So today, let us rededicate ourselves to a path of mutual understanding and respect.
94	Let us rethink old assumptions and open our hearts and minds to possible and possibilities.

The use of imperative ‘Let us’ indicates that Trump is making suggestion and persuasion instead of giving a direct command. In addition, by using the imperative, Trump also tried to shorten the distance between him and the audience, and further to call on them to take actions together and share an agreement with him over the Jerusalem declaration he proposed.

In modality analysis, specifically the analysis of modal operator values, from Table 5, it is found that Trump used most median values of modal operators in his speech. Referring to Table 3, modal operators in median values involve the use of ‘will’, ‘would’, ‘shall’, and ‘should’. Modal operator ‘Will’ is the most used by Trump in his speech, followed by ‘would’ and ‘should’. There is a consideration why Trump chose mostly ‘will’ since ‘will’ in interpersonal metafunction has two roles in the speech, either ‘will’ as a predicator of future tense or ‘will’ as a symbol of strong wish and determination. In the speech, ‘will’ as a predicator of future is dominant use; it shows that Trump tried to give the audience a good sight about the future impact of his decision in his speech as seen in Table IX.

TABLE IX. ‘WILL’ AS PREDICATOR IN THE SPEECH

Clause No.	Clause in the speech
56	This <i>will</i> immediately begin the process of hiring architects, engineers, and planners.
57	so that a new embassy, when completed, <i>will</i> be a magnificent tribute to peace.

Besides, Trump also used ‘will’ as a symbol to show his strong wish and determination as seen in Table X.

TABLE X. 'WILL' AS SYMBOL OF STRONG WISH IN THE SPEECH

Clause No.	Clause in the speech
75	we <i>will</i> arrive at a peace and a place far greater in understanding and cooperation.

Modal operator 'must' be also adopted by Trump in his speech. "Must", represents the highest value or scale of modal commitment; commonly, 'must' signals the highest degree of pressure on wish and command as seen in Table XI.

TABLE XI. 'MUST' AS THE HIGHEST VALUE IN THE SPEECH

Clause No.	Clause in the speech
43-46	Jerusalem is today — and <i>must</i> remain — a place where Jews pray at the Western Wall, where Christians walk the Stations of the Cross, and where Muslims worship at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

In the analysis of Tense, from Table 6, it is found that Trump used most present tenses in his speech, followed by Past and future tenses. In the speech, Trump used present tenses to describe Jerusalem's situation ranging from political, economic and cultural fields at the present, therefore it is normal he used the tense more since Jerusalem became hot issue worldwide at that time. He also used past tense to give his background for doing the Jerusalem declaration and used the future tense to give the audience a good sight about the future impact of his decision on the declaration [2].

In Table 7, there is an analysis of personal pronouns. In interpersonal metafunction, the choice of different personal pronouns could impact directly to the audience because the choice itself can clearly make the audience know the attitude of the speaker; therefore, it can establish the social relationship between the speaker and the audience in a speech. From Table 8, it can be seen that the first personal pronoun is mostly used in the speech both in singular and plural forms. Trump adopted the first personal pronoun singular 'I/me/my' to refer him as himself and as the authority for giving the speech, the president of the US. The most interesting thing in the speech is the use of the first personal pronoun plural 'we/us/our' since in interpersonal metafunction the pronoun 'we/us/our' can be applied as both inclusive and exclusive implementation. Inclusive means the speaker (I) and the audience (you) are equalized by maintaining emotional effectiveness of sharing same objectives while exclusive refers to the speaker (I) and others which implies a sense of authority, making the audience feel that the speaker (and his team) has authority and power to do something. To get a clear description, in Table XII and XIII is presented the use of both inclusive and exclusive in the speech.

TABLE XII. 'WE/US/OUR' AS INCLUSIVE IN THE SPEECH

Clause No.	Clause in the speech
3	<i>We</i> cannot solve <i>our</i> problems by making the same failed assumptions and repeating the same failed strategies of the past. Mosque.
81	<i>Our</i> children should inherit <i>our</i> love, not <i>our</i> conflicts.
93	So today, let <i>us</i> rededicate <i>ourselves</i> to a path of mutual understanding and respect.

TABLE XIII. 'WE/US/OUR' AS EXCLUSIVE IN THE SPEECH

Clause No.	Clause in the speech
48	In fact, we have declined to acknowledge any Israeli capital at all.
60-61	<i>We</i> want an agreement that is a great deal for the Israelis and a great deal for the Palestinians.

Related to the fact, in the speech, the inclusive type is used mostly by Trump in his speech. The only reason is because he tried to shorten the distance between him and the audience for sharing the same feelings and attitude over the case, and finally, persuaded the audience to accept and support his decision [1].

V. CONCLUSION

After completing the study, it can be concluded that Trump has put much effort to convince the audience, in this case, American people and world communities, that the decision he made to declare Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel is the right decision. It is proven by the interpersonal metafunction analysis in the present study. Trump used most declarative clauses in his speech. He did this because he tried to deliver his view and messages as many as possible regarding the case to the audience. As in interpersonal metafunction, that kind of clauses is functioned as statements. In addition, Trump tried to persuade the audience to take action and an agreement with him over the case by using imperative clauses 'let's'. Trump also uses most modal verbal operators with higher or highest modal commitment. He did this because he tried to show his firm determination over his decision in the case. Besides, Trump used the most first personal pronoun in the plural form "we-us-our" because he tried to shorten the distance between him and the audience for sharing the same feelings and attitude over the case, and finally, persuaded the audience to accept and support his decision.

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