# SPEECH FUNCTION IN FEATURE STORIES IN READER'S DIGEST

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## ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to find out the dominant type and to explain the meaning of the Speech Functions used in Feature Stories of Reader's Digest Magazines; *The Council of Dads, Blind Optimism, and Where Children Sleep. T*he data were analyzed based on the 4 types of Speech Function suggested by Halliday (1994). The result shows that the most dominant type of Speech Function used in Reader's Digest' Feature Stories was *statement* which is realized by declarative mood. This indicate that the writer in order to deliver the 'human interest' to the readers, entertain the readers, describing the news hook to the reader, to narrated in a chronological the stories for the readers are by using *Statements.*

**Key words:** Speech functions, feature stories.

## INTRODUCTION

In human life, people need and exchange information for their communication and they use languages in order to express their thoughts, feelings, desires and intentions both in written or spoken forms. Basically, speech functions denote a speaker's attitude and judgment which are called meaning in the traditional grammar and expressed in the structural form called Mood. In other words, in language there is Interpersonal Meaning that has two levels namely Speech Functions and Mood which expresses a complete sentence.

In communication process, there is a transfer of information from the author to the readers. A text, for instance, contains much information needed by people in their life. This

information is described by applying the grammatical features such as the Speech Functions and Mood.

Considering the importance of information in life, it is important to know how the information is presented to the readers. Through the Speech Functions and Mood, a text like a story can be analyzed to discover its grammatical features by applying the Speech Functions and Mood. According to Halliday (1994:69) these two variables, when taken together, define the four primary Speech Functions of Offer, Command, Statement, and Question. Statement is a way of giving information that can be either positive or negative. Question is a way of demanding information in form of interrogative statement of the Yes/No questions and Information questions (What, Where, Who, Whose, Whom, When, Why, How, and How + Adverb / Adjective). Offer is an expression of willingness to give or to do something. Command is a way of giving some information, goods or services in terms of functional grammar by forcing the listeners to do what is required.

Many textbooks, newspapers, magazines, journals and other sources of information available are printed in English. As the most important medium, a magazine provides a lot of information and entertainment. A feature story, for instance, is one of interesting articles in magazine. A feature story is about facts not about fiction with great human interests. Therefore, this study is aimed at finding the dominant type of Speech Functions used in Reader's Digest feature stories, and also to explain the meaning used.

Analyzing the feature stories can reveal much more about the grammatical features of the composition. It is expected that by applying the concept of Speech Functions, there will be a deeper understanding of the text as the object of analysis and of the English grammar as used in the compositions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 1. Functional Grammar

Functional grammar views language as sources for making meaning. Halliday (in Bloor and Bloor, 1995:1) states that language is 'a system of meaning'. When people use language, their language act contains the expression of meaning. Functional grammar is an application of

functional approach that shows language first and the system of communication and also sees how the grammar itself is organized to allow the speakers or the writers to exchange meaning.

Textual function is when the language is organized in written to the real world and any other linguistic events.

Interpersonal function is when the language is used to enable people to participate in communicative acts with other people, to express and to understand their feelings, attitude and judgments. According to Gerot and Wignell (1994:13), interpersonal function refers to a speaker's attitudes and judgments. These are meanings for acting upon the language with others. There are two levels of interpersonal function: they are speech functions and mood. At the level of discourse and semantics or lexicogrammar the term Mood is used. And at the level of semantics, human beings perform two roles namely Giving and Demanding. The commodity exchanged may be either Information or Goods & Services as explained as follows:

- Giving/information = statement (S);
- Demand/information = question (Q);
- Give/goods & services = offer (O);
- Demand/goods & services = command (C)

According to Halliday (1994:69), the two variables are role and commodities exchanged, if taken together, define the four primary speech functions; Statement, Question, Offer, and Command. Speech functions can be defined as the way the speaker shows or expresses his idea in order to make the listener understand the idea.

**Metafunction**

Metafunction is the function of language based on human use of the language. The meaning of metafunction is to represent, to exchange, and to organize experiences. These metafunctions technically are termed as ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. Furthermore, function is equal to meaning: it means that language conveys four kinds of meaning namely: Experiential, Logical, Interpersonal, and Textual meaning. The grammar of language centers on the four meanings.

The Ideational function is divided into experiential functions where language is used to describe experience and logical functions. Language is used to relate to experiences (Saragih,

2010:13). The Ideational function of language is concerned with the communication and interlinking of ideas and may itself be broken down into the experiential and logical functions (Morley, 2000:11). The interpersonal function is the function of language to exchange human experiences. According to Morley (2000:11) the experiential function is the one where by speakers express the propositional content elements of his/ her utterance, in other words communicates his/her ideas. The textual function is the way to organize the text.

**Interpersonal Function**

Language is the basically used by people to communicate with one another. One of the main purposes of communicating through the language is to interact with others and to maintain social relationships between the speakers or writers and the listeners or readers. From the viewpoint of functional grammar, the meaning exchanged is called interpersonal meaning.

The interpersonal function refers to a form of action that the speakers or writers perform in doing something to the listeners or readers through the meaning of language. In order to build an interaction with other people, the four specific forms namely statement, question, offer and command are used. The interpersonal function enables language users to take on the role of how to communicate with one another. The interpersonal function mirrors the tenor parameter of register and is evidenced in two main ways: through verbal interaction and exchanges with others through personal mediation/modulation of the main idea/content (Morley, 2000:12). In communication there are two roles: giving and demanding. When the speaker is either giving or demanding something, it expected that the listener is giving something in response. Interpersonal meaning is a set out of an interpretation of the clause in its function as an exchange. The basic of exchange is giving and demanding for information or goods and services.

The interpersonal function is realized at the two levels namely at the level of discourse which is termed speech function and at the level of lexicogrammar which is mood.

**Speech Functions**

The four speech functions (statement, question, offer, and command) are semantic in nature. Speech function is the speaker's role in communicative exchange. Interpersonal relationships are that of what the language is doing, the purpose of the discourse- speech functions. For example, could we stop for a minute, please? Is a request, would you like a sweet?

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Is an offer, whatever you do is a command (Morley, 2000:9). They find their realization in mood which is as aspect of interpersonal meaning at the level of lexicogrammar. In their unmarked or congruent representations, the speech functions of statement, question and command are realized by declarative, interrogative and imperative moods. But the speech function of offer does not have an unmarked presentation of Mood.

Giving means inviting the listener to receive and demanding means inviting the listener to give. Gerrot and Weignell (1994:22) explain that:

> If speakers give you some information, he or she is inherently inviting you to receive that information. If a speaker offers you some goods (offers a chocolate, for example), or some service (offers to type up and distribute class list), the speaker is inherently inviting you to receive those goods and service. Or if he or she demands information of you, inherently you're invited to give that information. And if he or she demands some goods or services of you ("ohh, scratch my back just there please"), you are thereby invited to tender that service or provide the goods.

**Types of Speech Function**

*Statement*

Statement is a way of giving information that can be either positive or negative. Statements are used to provide information, make remarks, assertions and so on. It is called as a statement if the subject is placed in front of a verb or auxiliary verb and it is ended with a period (.). In this study, statements are most naturally expressed by declarative clauses.

For example:

My uncle left for Timor Leste to serve in the army. My mom is a midwife.

*Question*

Question is a way of demanding information in the form of interrogative statement. Questions are used to enquire about something to request information or to probe. There are types of Question such as: Yes or no-questions; and Wh-questions.

*Offer*

Offer is an expression of willingness to give or do something. Offer does not have an unmarked representation of mood. Offers are the odd one out, since they are not associated with

a specific mood choice (though they are strongly associated with modality). The formula is: (modal+ subject+ v)

For example:

Would you like to take that book?; Let me take the book for you!

*Command*

Command is a way to receive some information, goods or service by forcing the listener to give them. A command is used to get things done or to obtain goods or services. Commands are usually used in oral interactions, though they can be found in written procedures such as instruction or in dialogue. Command is realized by imperative clauses.

For example: Push!; Open the door!; Please don't smoke here!

The speech functions of statement, question, and command are realized by declarative, interrogative, and imperative clauses in which statements are most naturally expressed by declarative clause; Questions by interrogative clauses; and Command by imperative clauses. They are different from 'off which does not have an unmarked representation of Mood.

The examples of initiation and responding in speech functions:

**Statement**

My mom gives her a cup of coffee.

**Acknowledgment Statement**

Oh, does she?

**Question**

What is she giving her?

**Response statement to question**

A cup of coffee.

**Offer**

Would you like some coffee?

**Acknowledge offer**

Yes, I would or No I wouldn't

**Command**

Drink it!

**Response Offer to Command**

All right or I will

2. **Reader's Digest Magazine**

Reader's Digest is a monthly general family magazine. It is published by Reader's Digest Asia. It was founded in 1922, by DeWitt Wallace and Lila Bell Wallace. For many years, Reader's Digest has been the best-selling consumer magazine in the U.S. with a circulation of over 10 million copies in the United States, and a readership of 38 million as measured by Media Mark. Global editions of Reader's Digest reach an additional 40 million people in more than 70 countries, with 50 editions in 21 languages. It is also published in Braille, digital, audio, and a version in large type called Reader's Digest Large Print. The magazine is compact, with its pages roughly half the size of most American magazines'. From 2002 through 2006, Reader's Digest conducted a vocabulary competition in schools throughout the United States called Reader's Digest National Word Power Challenge (NWPC). Although *Reader's Digest* was founded in the U.S., its international editions have made it the best-selling monthly magazine in the world.

**Feature Story**

Feature stories tell a story through people, engaging them through what is called "human-interest" stories. Life is not just a common phenomenon. There can be stories of spectacular events such as a miracle in which the people are tested for their endurance. Feature stories, however, have some kind of news, It is narrated in a chronological or thematic o rder, in it observation, description, lots of great quotes from the people telling the story are an imagine a full picture of what is being described. Other elements in a feature story include a documentary story, an expert interview and a reporter's observations over what people have done to achieve something extra- ordinary . Such a story will attract the attention of the readers.

Feature stories apply the journalistic language such as describing news and the news should be interesting. The news of feature story can be hard and also it can be soft news. Hard news is such as the death of a famous public figure or the plans of city council to raise taxes and it must use 5W 1H. Soft news, such as the widespread popularity of tattooing among athletes or the resurgence of interest in perennial gardening, is also reported by the writer. A feature is different with News as usually, in feature stories there is human factor more appearance than other news.

**Conceptual Framework**

Speech function is the speaker's role in a communicative exchange which consists of four elements namely statement, question, offer, command. Speech function can be understood by reading the sources that contain speech functions that can be clearly classified. A story is a full sequence of events in a work of fiction as imagined by the writer. It is defined as a narrative or a tale of real or fictitious events. Stories can be found in many media such as magazine, and newspaper. Every story has a theme, a plot, characters, and a conflict. Many stories describe spectacular situations which attract human interest.

In this case, the writer will choose Feature stories as the tool for analysis of Speech Functions. Therefore, by learning Speech Functions, this research can provide more information about the nature of any story so that it is easier for the readers to understand the Feature Stories in Reader's Digest Magazine

## RESEARCH METHOD AND FINDING

This study is conducted by using descriptive qualitative research. The data of this research are taken from three Reader's Digest magazines published monthly by Reader's Digest focusing on Feature Stories from which were found 742 Speech Functions and three types of Speech Function found and the most dominantly was Statements, followed by Questions, Commands, and Offers.

## CONCLUSIONS

Of the four types of Speech Function found in Feature Stories, Statement, Question and Command are used, and Statement is the most dominant type of speech function used in Feature Stories. It means the way a Stories writer's share the News information of the Feature is by using statements.

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