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## AN ANALYSIS OF MOOD AND MODALITY: STUDENTS' HOPES AND VIEWS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF LEARNING AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**Abstract:** Since the outbreak of Coronavirus in 2020, teaching and studying activities commonly conducted in the classrooms were shifted to online, which caused students to adapt and accept without compromising. This study analyzed the dialogue texts expressing students' hopes and views about the future of learning amidst the Covid-19 pandemic written by the Senior High School students of Nanyang Zhi Hui school in Medan, Sumatera Utara. The objectives are to analyze the mood, modality, and modality orientation types; and figure out the dominantly-applied mood, modality, and orientation types in the dialogue texts. This descriptive qualitative research applied the Mood and Modality theory by Halliday and other linguists. The study revealed that 1) three mood types: declarative, interrogative, and imperative, four types of modality: probability, usuality, obligation, and inclination range from low, median, and high degrees; four orientations: subjective-explicit, subjective-implicit, objective-explicit, and objective-implicit occurred in the texts; and 2) the clauses are represented through the extensive use of declarative mood (80,74%), median probability (47%), and implicitly objective modality orientation (45,15%). The study concludes that the students tend to give their insights using statements with median probability and orientation of objective-implicit in the dialogue, which shows a lack of confidence in the utterances.

**Keywords:** covid-19 pandemic, modality, mood, orientation

## INTRODUCTION

The sudden pandemic of COVID-19 has caused tremendous changes in many aspects of life, one of which is the changes in the education system that impact both educators and students (Dwiaryanti & Rahman, 2021). The Senior High School students and teachers of Nanyang Zhi Hui school in Medan have been applying an online learning system by using extensive online applications such as Google Meet and Google Classroom for more than a year. Some students found online learning very convenient because they did not have to wake up early and travel to school; however, others looked bored and lost interest in learning. Therefore, it is still a concern whether students can get the lessons fully as when they were in the classroom and whether online learning is what they prefer or the condition they are forced to accept. The topic of dialogue regarding the views and hopes of students about the future learning system amidst the Covid-19 pandemic includes the students' judgment and attitude towards the learning system planned by the school and government shortly. Hope is desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment, and the view is an opinion or judgment colored by the feeling or bias of its holder (*Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-Trusted Online Dictionary*, n.d.). Interpersonal metafunction is one of the language functions which focuses on clauses as exchange and the relationship between speaker/writer and listeners/readers, and it can be realized through mood and modality analysis. By using the theory of mood and modality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and some others' relevant theories, the attitude and judgment of speakers and listeners towards a matter or information they exchange can be analyzed.

Several studies on mood and modality focused on speeches by famous leaders. First, "An Interpersonal Meaning Analysis of Ahok's Blasphemy Case in Online News Portals" by Kartika & Wihadi (2018), which discussed the mood and modality in online news articles. This descriptive qualitative research showed that only one mood and modality type appeared in the articles, namely indicative, declarative type, and the modalization is probability type. Vrika et al. (2019) studied the realization of interpersonal meaning in the report text of the undergraduate students of Universitas Batanghari Jambi". They analyzed mood system, modality system, speech function, and students' mastery in writing report text. This research has four main findings: two types of mood realize in the text are declarative mood and imperative mood; four types of

modality system, there are 8 clauses indicate as probability type, 30 clauses indicate as usuality type, 7 clauses indicate as obligation type and 30 clauses indicate as inclination type; and the students' mastery in writing. Then, Kristianti (2020) investigated the interpersonal meanings of mood and modality in Jacinda Arden's speeches on Covid-19. The research reveals that only two types of modal and mood used in the speech: probability, obligation, declarative, and imperative.

Many studies on mood and modality analysis have been explored, yet none ever analyzed the content of students' dialogue about their hopes and views before especially on the topic related to COVID-19 pandemic. This study focused specifically on interpersonal meaning which consists of mood and modality using Halliday's and other linguists' theories. It revealed the attitude and judgment of Nanyang Zhi Hui students about the future learning system expressed in the clauses of their dialogue texts; thus, the objectives of this study are 1) to figure out the types and value of modality applied in the students' dialogue texts; 2) to find out the most dominant types and value of modality applied in the students' dialogue text; and 3) to figure out the orientation of modality realized in the students' dialogue texts. This study can give information about the students' attitude and judgment regarding their likeliness to have the offline or classroom learning system in the near future.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), language is a tool to express meaning, and there are three functional types of meaning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual, also known as metafunctions. Gerot in Amalia & Pramudyawardhani (2016:21) explained that the meanings through which social relations are created and maintained are called interpersonal meanings, which are realized in the lexicogrammar through selections from the system of mood. Interpersonal meanings are basically taking account of speaking or dialogue analysis which is an interactive and collaborative process of speakers and addressees since the function of language here is the clause as exchange, either exchanging information, opinion or even judgment. They are realized lexicogramatically by using the systems of mood and modality, which is applied in this research and are going to be further explicated. Halliday also adds that the mood structure, when analyzed in the form of clauses, can be seen as a chain of exchanges in the flow of

a dialogue or conversation. On the other hand, a speaker's attitude toward or opinion about the truth of a proposition represented by a sentence is referred to as modality. It includes his / her attitude toward the circumstance or occurrence that a clause describes. By analyzing the mood and modality of clauses in the dialogue texts, we are able to interpret the students' attitude and judgment towards a matter.

The mood is the element in the clause which shows the speech roles from the grammatical structure (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The basic models of speech roles are giving and demanding; that is how the types of mood structure are classified. Gerot & Wignell in (Afsari et al., 2021) suggest three mood types which are 'Indicative mood' often recognized as statements (declarative), questions (interrogative) and command (imperative). The purpose of declarative mood is to give information to the addressee, while the interrogative is often used to demand information from the listener. The interrogative is also divided into two types, the WH-Question, which demands a content answer, and Polar Question, which requires either a yes (affirmative) or no (negative) answer. Last, 'Imperative mood' which purpose is for exchanging (giving and demanding) goods and services. The imperative mood is often in the form of command, demand, and offer. The dominant mood in a conversation or dialogue is determined by the purpose of the speakers in conveying the message.

According to Thompson (2014), only independent sentences in English have a choice of mood, with Subject and Finite as Mood structure elements. The nominal group is normally categorized as Subject, whereas Finite is basically auxiliaries (is, am, are, was, were, do, does, did, has, have, had) or positive verb forms (play, plays, played) that denote the tense (temporal operators) and modal verbs (modal operators), such as, can, may, would, etc. The finite signals the polarity of a clause (whether a clause is positive or negative). The structure of declarative mood usually consists of Subject + Finite; the interrogative mood takes the structure of Subject/WH + Finite (for WH question) and Finite + Subject (for Polar question); and the imperative mood structure can be Subject + Finite / Subject only / Finite only /no Subject or Finite. Therefore, to recognize the mood of a clause, it is to see the position of the Subject and finite according to the structure of each mood.

Modality, on the other hand, means polarity or a choice between yes and no and intermediate degrees of 'sometimes' or 'maybe' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Modality

can express certainty or uncertainty, possibility or impossibility, which lies between the positive and negative polar. But et al. in (Elfhariyanti et al., 2021) described the term of modality as the speaker's positioning regarding the possibility, usuality, typically, obviousness, obligation, and inclination. By observing modal verbs and modal adjuncts (aka adverbs), we can determine a speaker's attitude towards a matter, it can show doubt, wish, regret, and/ or desire. Both Egging (2004:184) and Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) stated that modality has two divisions which are modalization and modulation.

a. Modalization deals with the probability and usuality of propositions.

Probability is talking about the likelihood or possibility of an occurrence. For instance, "It might rain tonight." – This clause indicates that there is a possibility of rain tonight. While usuality refers to the frequency of an occurrence (how often or seldom something happens). For instance, "Billy is always late for class." Halliday & Matthiessen (2004:147) mentioned that there are two kinds of intermediate possibilities for probability and usuality ranging from low, median and high degrees: (i) probability: 'possibly/probably/certainly'; (ii) usuality: 'sometimes/usually/always'.

b. Modulation points out the degree of obligation and inclination in the proposal.

Obligation refers to modality of command, demand, suggestion or advice; for example, "You shouldn't eat too much." While inclination represents the tendency, willingness, commitment and determination of the speaker in conducting something; for instance, "I am determined to finish my study." Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) also stated that two kinds of intermediate possibilities for obligation and inclination ranging from low, median and high degrees: (i) in a command, the intermediate points represent degrees of obligation: 'allowed to/supposed to/required to'; (ii) in an offer, they represent degrees of inclination: 'willing to/anxious to/determined to'.

The degrees or values of modality can also be inferred by finite modal operators which are also going to be used in this analysis. According to Halliday in (Sadia & Ghani, 2018), the positive modal operators are can, may, could, might (low degree); will, would, should, is/was to (median degree), and must, ought to, need, has/ had to (high degree). The modal operators of negativity are needn't, do/does/did not + need to, have to (low degree), won't, wouldn't, shouldn't, isn't/wasn't to (median degree), and mustn't, oughtn't to, can't, couldn't, mayn't, mightn't, hasn't/hadn't to (high degree). High degree modality

means there is strong confidence or urge in the utterance; on the contrary, low degree modality shows strong doubt or little urge in the utterance.

The Orientation distinction, which distinguishes between subjective and objective modality, as well as explicit and implicit versions, is the fundamental distinction that dictates how each form of modality will be realized. Speakers can use a variety of methods to express themselves. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), the speaker interprets the statement as projection and encodes the subjectivity, such as by using the clause 'I believe...' or objectivity by using the clause 'It is likely...' in the projecting sentence in order to assert openly that the probability is subjective or claim expressively that the probability is objective. Orientation, according to Thompson, 2014, p. 75, is how the speaker seems to take responsibility for the pressure on the other person: whether the pressure comes from another source, not directly from the speaker, or directly from the speaker himself. When the modality is presented in the same sentence as the main proposition, the word 'implicit' is used; when it is written in a separate clause, the term 'explicit' is used (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 181).

## **METHOD**

The study was conducted by using the descriptive qualitative approach since the purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the mood and modality found in students' dialogue texts. According to Creswell in (Vrika et al., 2019), a qualitative research design is a tool which purpose is to observe and comprehend the meaning individuals or groups associate with social or human problems.

The researcher plays an important role as a data collector and an analyst in this study. The participants of this study are 42 students of Senior High School in Nanyang Zhi Hui School Medan. The school has applied online learning since the beginning of April 2020 by several online applications such as Google Classroom and Google Meet. The first step of the research was formulating a google form as the tool for collecting dialogue texts, then it was sent to the students. They paired themselves freely to work on their dialogue texts based on the conversation they had with their partner about their view on the future learning system amidst the pandemic of COVID-19. A total of 21 dialogue texts were collected. From each text, there are 20 to 50 clauses.

## Write a conversation text about your view and ideas between you & your partner. ✕

Requirements: minimal 20 lines (10 pairs)

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⋮

Pandemic and online learning have lasted for approximately 14 months. Vaccines have been given specifically to educators in order to enable OFFLINE class will be resume in near future (2021). The conversation should cover your opinions / views/ ideas about these following issues:

1. The future of education system, school and students
2. The certainty / possibility of OFFLINE learning:
  - \* Will students come back to schools?
  - \* How certain are you?
  - \* Put yourselves in the shoes of students and parents.
  - \* State your reasons to support your ideas.
3. How about your preferences?

P.S. : You are allowed to add the issues and views over them.

Act  
Go t

**Figure 1: Google Form for Collecting Dialogue Texts**

Source:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AdE4bchGksYTXypPOnm3hnmvIMJxT0tI17OPnR0D6IU/edit>

After all the speaking texts had been collected, then all the clauses were analyzed for the mood structures and modality (modal operators / adjuncts). Each clause which contains modal operators or adjuncts was observed again based on the types, degrees and orientation. As Bloor & Bloor, 2013 stated in their book "The functional analysis of English" that the major unit of grammatical analysis is the clause as it has a special place in expressing meaning, the researcher focused mainly on the clauses especially those which contain modality aspects.

In order to figure out the mood, the clauses were analyzed using tables to break down the structure of the clauses (Subject, finite, predicator, adjunct/ complement). Whereas, in analyzing the modality, the clauses with modality were categorized according to the types and the degrees of the modality in each clause. Tables were also used to present the analysis of the clauses. Then, after all the analysis was done, the researcher calculated the data to find the percentage and the most dominant mood, modality, and orientation used in the overall clauses by using the formula of Bungin in Manalu, 2018. Finally, the conclusion was drawn by explaining the findings according to the results of the analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

In this study, twenty-one students' conversation/dialogue texts were analyzed according to the mood types, modality types, modality values, and orientation, and the representative results of the analysis are presented in tables and figures, which are described below.

### Types of Mood

The following table shows the finding of the mood types used by the students in expressing their hopes and views about the future of learning amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. In twenty-one dialogue texts, there are a total of 706 clauses analyzed.

**Table 1. The Mood Types in Students' Dialogue Texts**

	Mood Types		
	Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative
Total	570	120	16
Percentage	80,74%	17,00%	2,27%

Source:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AdE4bchGksYTXypPOnm3hnmvIMJxT0tI17OPnR0D6IU/edit>  
(calculated in personal excel file)

Table 1 summarized that from the total of 706 sentences, there is 570 declarative mood used in the dialogue texts, and this declarative mood is the most dominant mood type applied by the students in their dialogue which is 80,74% overall used. The second commonly used mood type is the interrogative with the number of 120 sentences or 17%. Lastly, the least used mood type is the imperative mood which is applied only 16 times overall with a percentage of 2,27%.

### Types and Values of Modality

In the dialogue texts analyzed, from all 706 clauses, there are altogether **300** clauses (42,49% of the clauses) applying modality. The researcher discovered 4 types of modality, probability, usuality, obligation and inclination from low, median to high values are used in the conversation texts. The tables below summarize the mood and modality statistics from the dialogue texts which have been analyzed:



**Table 2 Summary of Modality in students' dialogue texts**

Modality types and values	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Probability (low)	84 clauses	28,00%
Probability (median)	141 clauses	47,00%
Probability (high)	16 clauses	5,33%
Usuality (low)	4 clauses	1,33%
Usuality (median)	0 clause	0%
Usuality (high)	1 clause	0,67%
Obligation (low)	10 clauses	3,33%
Obligation (median)	13 clauses	4,67%
Obligation (high)	14 clauses	4,67%
Inclination (low)	5 clauses	1,67%
Inclination (median)	11 clauses	3,33%
Inclination (high)	0 clause	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>

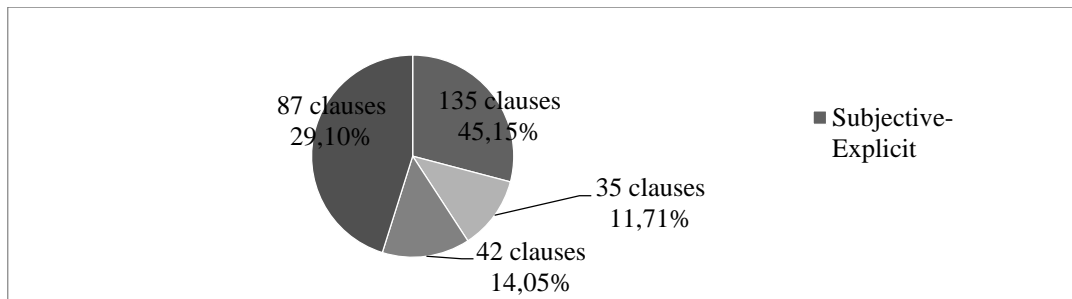
Source:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AdE4bchGksYTXypPOnm3hnmvIMJxT0tI17OPnR0D6IU/edit>  
(calculated in personal excel file)

Based on the findings shown in the table above, probability type of modality is widely used in expressing students' views and hopes which is 241 clauses (80,33%) altogether. The rarest used one is the usuality type which is applied only in 6 clauses or 2% used overall.

### Orientation of Modality

There are four types of modality orientation found in the students' hopes and views dialogue texts, and the number and percentage of each one are shown in the following pie chart.



**Figure 2: Orientation of Modality found in Students' Dialogue Texts**

Source:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AdE4bchGksYTXypPOnm3hnmvIMJxT0tI17OPnR0D6IU/edit>  
(calculated in personal excel file)

The percentages of Subjective-Explicit, Subjective-Implicit, Objective-Explicit, and Objective-Implicit are represented clearly in figure 4.3.1. Of the total 299 clauses, the pie chart shows 87 sentences make up Subjective-Explicit, whereas 42 sentences make up Objective-Explicit, 35 sentences make up Subjective-Implicit, and 135 sentences make

up Objective-Implicit. As a result, the most common orientation in the students' dialogue texts is Objective-Implicit.

### **Discussion**

The researcher discovered three types of mood in the students' views and hopes about the future of learning amidst Covid-19 pandemic dialogue texts. They are declarative, interrogative, and imperative moods. Three speech functions: statements, questions (polar and WH), and commands are also found in the dialogues. There are four types of modality: usuality, probability, obligation, and inclination, and three values of modality: high, median, and low applied in the students' dialogue texts, except the median-usuality type and the high-inclination type.

The most dominant mood applied in the students' views, and hopes about the future of learning amidst Covid-19 pandemic dialogue texts is the declarative mood. Since the purpose of the dialogue is to convey views and hopes about a topic, the mood mostly used is declarative which purpose is to give information to the listeners. The students give more information to their friends and sometimes demand an answer. That is why the second dominant mood type is the interrogative. In order to require a response in a conversation, the interrogative mood is used to inquire the listener to contribute his/her opinion and vice versa. This finding concludes that in order to express their views and hopes, the students commonly focused on giving information to the listeners by conveying statements and moderately asking for others' thoughts (information). Imperative mood, which function is to demand good and service, is least used because no service is really needed during the conversation.

The interpretation of modality can be divided based on the degree of the modality types (Suhadi, 2011). The dominantly-used modality type in the dialogue texts appears to be the probability type with median value/degree which means the students talk more about the likeliness or probability of their views and hopes to happen. The median degree reflects their lack of confidence in the future of learning. This might be supported by the condition where the increasing spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia and also the consent from their parents. The use of median degree can also be interpreted as the students are in a neutral state, which means they will follow the decision given by the authorities (their parents, school or government). The low-probability type is following as the second most dominantly-used modality types and degrees, which can be concluded that a small

number of students are conveying the lowest degree of confidence. They are very uncertain about the future of the learning system they are going to face. The findings sum up that the expressions of hopes and views expressed by the students are not in a high degree of modality, but predominantly in the level of median modality, which indicates that they are unsure and not in high expectation about the future of the educational system.

Lastly, the author found out that Objective-Implicit orientation dominates the modality orientation in this research. This shows how the students seem to take responsibility for the utterances. In conveying information to their friends in the dialogue, the students tend to give their statement objectively rather than subjectively, so that the information seems to be part of general opinion, not only his/ her own opinion. In addition, they often used implicit orientation by adding the clauses such as, I think..., I feel..., which also shows a median degree or lack of certainty.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

The outcomes of this study provide an overview of grammatical qualities in mood and modality of interpersonal meaning, implying how students employ mood and modality when chatting with their partner. It can be concluded that students sometimes tend to be monotonous and doubtful in expressing their hopes and views because they are applying overwhelmingly amounts of median probability in objective-implicit orientation, which means students do not want to appear straightforward and dominant, but rather more implicit and objective.

### **Suggestions**

The content of dialogue texts regarding students' views and hopes about the future of learning amidst Covid-19 pandemic is an appealing topic since it is still new. This study is only intended to analyze the mood and modality in the dialogue texts. Various other types of research can be carried out using this topic, such as content, text, discourse, error or politeness analysis. The future researchers can also consider analyzing the other two metafunctions: textual and ideational of the same or different topics of dialogues.

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