

MOOD CHOICE IN GRADUATE STUDENTS' SIMULATED CONVERSATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the mood choice used by Indonesian English foreign language learners. The data were the spoken utterances of simulated conversation by four graduate students of English Education Department. The data were transcribed, encoded, analyzed, and interpreted based on the taxonomy of mood system, within the framework of Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, as proposed mainly by Eggins and Slade (1997) and Eggins (2004). Findings revealed that there are six types of moods, namely declarative, tagged declarative, polar interrogative, wh-interrogative, imperative, and exclamative. In addition, there are non-mood clause, namely minor clause, nonfinite clause, and incomplete clause. The dominant findings of numbers of declarative moods suggested that the exchanges of information dominate the conversation. Also, this may indicate the levels of participants' competence in using casual English in foreign language context.

Keywords: systemic functional linguistics, mood system, conversation

BACKGROUND

People generally use language to communicate, express thoughts and feelings to build interpersonal relationship among others. As a medium, language is a system used by communicator not only to show his character (Saleh, 2014), but to construct and transfer information. Eggins (2004, p.1) illustrates that in the ordinary life of human beings, they constantly use language. They chat to family members, organize children for school, read paper, speak at meeting, serve customers, follow instructions in a booklet, etc. all of. Eggins and Slade (1997, p. 8) state "casual conversation is the kind of talk we engage in when we are talking just for the sake of talking."

The most suitable linguistic theory to cope with this problem is Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL). SFL is also known as Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), is a school of linguistics advocated by M. A. K. Halliday, based on Firthian Linguistics (Matthiesen, Teruya, K, & Lam, 2010, p.1). There are several numbers of distinctive perspectives of linguistics in this kind of grammar if compared to those in the traditional and formal (structural and transformational) grammar. The most prominent difference between those two types of grammars is that primarily in SFL language is viewed as a resource for making meaning (Fontaine, 2013). Thus, without ignoring the structures itself, the SFL deals with how the structure construct meaning.

Halliday (1985, p.xiii) states some reasons why language is functional. First is that each text unfolds in some context of use. Second is that the fundamental parts of meanings in language are functional. Third is that each constituent of the language contributes as an

organic configuration of functions. Those three reasons become the basis of the SFL views on language.

SFL experts divide the language strata into some categories, which called as stratification, one of which is lexico-grammar (Halliday & Matthiesen, 2004; 2014). It deals with the wording of the texts (Morley, 2000, p.22), which uses clause as the basis of analysis. One of the example is mood, which is interpersonal meaning. It can be expressed through modality, and appraisal (Martin & White, 2005; Wattles & Bojanic, 2007; Wei, Wherrity, Zhang, 2015).

However here the main topic is the modality, which is narrowly down into the mood. In SFL paradigm mood types in English language depend on the position of the Subject and the Finite in the clause. There are two basic categories in mood types: indicative and imperative moods (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; 2014). With respect to these categorization, Eggins (1997, p.85) then distinguishes mood types in more detail categorizations. They are declarative, polar interrogative, tagged declarative, polar declarative, WH-interrogative, imperative, and exclamative. Additionally, she adds the explanations on non-mood (non-finite and minor clause) and elliptical clause.

Declarative Mood

Declarative mood is structurally realized by the occurrence of Subject prior to Finite and other constituents of the clause (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Eggins, 2004). Two types of declarative moods are full and elliptical. In this full declaratives, all the constituents of clauses, Mood (Subject and Finite) and Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct) occur. In the elliptical declarative, one or more element(s) of the clause (Subject, Finite, Predicator, or Complement) are reduced. It is very common in casual conversation because of its practicality and similarity of context of the conversation. It is called as situational ellipsis (Biber et al, 1999, p.1048).

Tagged Declarative Mood

Syntactically, tagged declarative is still in declarative form. However, the obvious difference is on the existence of tag operator (Finite and Subject) in the final position of the clause.

Polar Interrogative Mood

In this interrogative mood, the Finite is placed prior to the Subject. This mood is expressed with purpose of Yes/ No answer (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Eggins, 2004). Two kinds of polar interrogative are full polar interrogative and elliptical polar interrogative. polar interrogative contains all the required constituents (Finite, Subject, Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct). Meanwhile, the elliptical one has one or more constituent(s) omitted. The omission can occur to Finite, Subject, or Predicator. This omission or ellipsis is commonly situational since the meaning can be guessed through the situation (Biber et al, 1999, p.1048).

WH-Interrogative Mood

This interrogative mood applies WH question words placed in the initial position prior to Finite, Subject, and other constituents. It is used to elicit circumstantial information (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Eggins, 2004). Two types of this interrogative mood: full and elliptical WH-interrogative. Using this interrogative form, the speaker employs all the constituents of WH-interrogative mood. Meanwhile, in elliptical form, one or more constituent(s) of the WH-interrogative clauses is/ are omitted generally for the purpose of rapidity.

Imperative Mood

Syntactically, the clause denoting in imperative mood is composed only a Predicator plus other constituent but not Subject and Finite. This mood is used to make a command (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Eggins, 2004). Closely associated with this mood is the directive illocutionary act by Searle (1979). Both have similar communicative function: commanding.

Exclamative Mood

Exclamative mood is syntactically expressed in a blend of declarative and interrogative pattern. Functionally, exclamatives are used to express emotional state e.g. surprise, anger, and annoyance or to express emphasis (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Eggins, 2004). This mood is closely related to the expressive illocutionary acts as suggested by Searle (1979).

Minor Clause

Minor clause contains brief and, very often, formulaic expression. It contains no mood structure at all. Nevertheless, this clause is essential in casual conversation since it serves as preludes to negotiation (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Eggins 2004). The minor clause can be in the form of lexical items (e.g.: Right! Exactly! Bloody hell! O.K. Fine), formulaic expressions (e.g.: Hi, Thanks, G'day), and non-lexical items (e.g.: Mmm, Uhhuh) (Eggins, 1997, p.94-95; Biber et al, 2000).

Non-Finite Clause

In this type of clause, there is no Finite present. Instead, it has only Predicator and Complement. It is rarely found in casual conversation because of its structural dependency which is difficult to practice in the spontaneity and rapidity in casual context (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Morley, 2000; Eggins, 2004).

From the background and theoretical explanations above, this study is concerned with the analysis of casual, simulated interaction, focusing on the analysis of spoken language in the casual conversation utilizing systemic functional grammar analysis of Mood. The Mood type deals with the interpersonal meanings shared by the participants. This concepts of language must be owned by the students of English department. This study, hence, aims: (1) at investigating the types of mood used by the graduate students of English department; and (2) at investigating the intension of the choice of dominant mood systems by the participants when communicating. It primarily uses systemic functional school of linguistics as the framework.

METHOD

Basically, this study is classified as descriptive qualitative. It involves data collection procedures which are mainly in non-numerical data (Dornyei, 2007, p.24). The data are the English utterances of the spoken dialogs of four graduate

students. They are third semester students in a state university in Central Java, Indonesia. However, quantitative data in the form of tabulation of numbers of data occurrence were also used in support of the qualitative analysis.

In line with the principles of qualitative research, the primary instrument in this research is human instrument, i.e. the researcher. It is the researcher, who determines the scenario of the research (Moleong, 2004, p.168; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). Croker (in Heigham & Croker, 2009, p.11) argues that there are at least two main basic reasons that qualitative

study uses its researcher as the primary instrument: (1) the researcher himself directly collects the data by observing or interviewing the participants, and (2) other research instruments such as observation field notes and interview snippets have to be interpreted by the researcher.

To collect the data, then the researcher recorded the simulated conversation, transcribed the conversation, categorized the data, and interpreted the findings. The categorization of the utterances is following the concept of mood system advocated mainly by Eggins and Slade (1997); Eggins (2004); and Bloor and Bloor (2004). In addition to the quantitative classification, the qualitative interpretation was then also carried out by the concepts of systemic functional approach as proposed primarily by Halliday (1985) Halliday & Matthiesen (2004; 2014), Gerot & Wignell (1994), Eggins & Slade (1997), Morley (2000), Eggins (2004), Bloor & Bloor (2004), and Martin (2007). It also considered the concepts of second language learning and acquisition as theorized by Saville-Troike (2006) and Brown (2007).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

On the basis of the results which were found in the transcript, there are 144 clauses containing moods in six types of moods found in the conversation. They are declarative, tagged declarative, WH interrogative, polar interrogative, imperative, and exclamative moods. In addition to clauses containing moods, there are other types of clauses found. They are incomplete clause and non-mood clause (minor clause and non-finite clause).

All the findings are presented quantitatively in the following table.

Table 1 types of moods in the conversation

Types of Moods	Frequency	Percentage
Declarative		
• Full	97	
• Elliptical	17	
	114	79.16%
Tagged Declarative	1	0.69%
WH interrogative		
• Full	3	
• Elliptical	2	
	5	3.47%
Polar Interrogative		

• Full	2		
• Elliptical	1		
		3	2.08%
Imperative		3	2.08%
Exclamative		2	1.38%
Minor Clause (Non-mood)		9	6.25%
Non-Finite Clause (Non-mood)		2	1.38%
Incomplete Clause		8	5.55%
Total		144	100%

Declarative Mood

As presented in Table 1, of all other mood types, declarative moods are quantitatively on the highest rank (114 of 144 or 79.16%). Declarative mood functionally concerns with the exchange of information, idea, or opinion. As a result, this suggests that the informational exchange is the main topic in the conversation. Few examples of declarative mood are presented in the following datum.

- E : *So, the case is Hanson has already prepared for tomorrow's presentations, presentations in thesis proposal class. But for his real thesis, he is still looking for a new idea. That's is the problem.*
- W : *I think you have to work hard.*
- D : Yes
- H : *If actually, if I start focusing on one topic, it's not too late*
- E : Yeah no

Those printed in italic utterances are in the form of full declarative clauses. E initiates exchange by giving the information of other speaker. Then W expresses his opinion using the declarative mood 'I think you have to work hard'.

Quantitatively, the number of declarative mood is very significant. Out of 144 clauses, 114 (79.16%) are in declarative mood. This suggests that there is a tendency of the participants of the conversation to perform the most basic mood. Syntactically, the declarative is simply formed by means of Subject and Finite. Even, in casual conversation it is permitted to perform the elliptical structure as long as it is understandable. Thus, for the non-native speakers of English in Indonesian context where English is still foreign language, this declarative mood is much more relatively easy to produce.

The other reason why this declarative mood is the most-frequently occurs in the conversation is that the nature of the conversation is semantically (and pragmatically) to exchange the information whether it is a fact, opinion, feeling, or belief. For example, the utterance *the case is Hanson has already prepared for tomorrow's presentations, presentations in thesis proposal* is an expression of fact. Then *I think you have to work hard* is a statement of opinion which is obviously indicated by the Mood Adjunct 'I think' (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiesen, 2004; 2014).

Tagged Declarative Mood

Next type of mood found in the conversation is tagged declarative. However, there is an issue that the participants' tendency in the avoidance of 'normal' tagged declarative since only one datum as presented in the following dialog.

H : Actually we still have a lot of time I think since we are still in third semester. *And the last time for taking thesis is in the fourth semester, right?*

D : Yeah.

It may be as a result of the fact that tagged declaratives require Finite in tag operator. In utterances the interlocutors implement invariant tagged declarative. It is commonly used in spoken casual language. Another possible reason for this is that the participant seemingly had difficulty in creating tagged declarative partly because of the linguistic transfer from his first language (Saville-Troike, 2006, p.41), which can be a communicative strategy. In English, the tagged declarative needs the repetition of Finite. It is totally different from that of speaker's national language Indonesia where all tagged declaratives are simply expressed by means of tag operator '*kan*' (Alwi et al, 1998). Consequently, on account of Indonesian influence as well as the spontaneity and rapidity in casual conversation, '*right*' is possibly used by the participant. Added to its easiness, the frequent use of expression '*right*' as a tag operator can be influenced massively by American English.

Polar Interrogative Mood

Next type of mood is polar interrogative. It is used to question. Examples of polar interrogative mood are presented in the following datum.

W : So you have to construct the title formula. *Do you have a title for your thesis?*

H : Yes, but it is still quantitative.

As presented in the dialog, the italic clause is classified as a polar interrogative mood that is used by W to initiate an exchange. He requests or demands an information in the form of Yes/ No statement from the other participants. This interrogative statement is then directly responded with a Yes statement by H. This finding confirms Halliday's statement that the interrogative mood is essentially used to demand information (1986; 2004; 2014). This view is strengthened by Martin and Rose (2007, p.224) that question as one of basic speech function is the opposite of statement, in which it giving, not demanding information.

WH-Interrogative Mood

Other type of interrogative mood is the WH interrogative. In casual conversation, this mood is commonly used to elicit additional information (Eggins & Slade, 1997), as presented in the following datum.

H : If I start choosing one topic that is specific and I've started reading some um articles and theories about that topic. I think that there are so many times left in our program.

D : That's your choice.

H : How about you guys? *What topic do you take?*

W : Mmmm I take translation topic about translation of ideology.

As presented in the italic utterance, the participant H is willing to the other information from the other participants. He wants to know the other participants' opinion. Functionally, the WH-interrogative mood is used in this context in order to achieve command for the exchange of information (Eggins, 2004; Bloor & Bloor, 2004).

Imperative Mood

The following type of mood is imperative. Functionally (semantically and pragmatically), this type of mood is performed in casual conversation to get someone to do something, or to order someone. The examples of imperative mood is presented in the following datum.

- H : Do you take quantitative research in your S-1 degree?
 E : Yes, but I'm not really sure that what I did before a...
 H : [laughing] Me too.
 E : It was really good. But, now I'm going to try to do my best.
 D : I did.
 E : Since I have already known many things in this program, S2 program about research.
 D : *Read Creswell!*
 E : Yeah. Creswell I think more easier [sic.] compared to other researcher.
 D : If..if we.. I mean.. if we would do qualitative in general I think you may read Sudaryanto. The book is in Indonesia. Expert.
 W : *Don't forget.* You have to read some books too.

As shown in the italic form, there are two types of imperative in the above datum. First is the positive imperative 'Read Creswell'. It uses Predicator 'Read'. Contextually, this utterance is presumably applied in order to negotiate the previous utterance. However, simply this mood is used by D to command or order E to do a particular thing, i.e. reading Creswell's book on qualitative research. The usage of this mood is also in line with the pragmatic concept of illocutionary act of directives, precisely in commanding or ordering force (Searle, 1979; Yule, 1996).

Next type of imperative found in the data is the negative-imperative mood. It uses Polarity Adjunct + Predicator 'Don't forget.' Not here serving as a polarity maker shows the negativity. The polarity marker 'don't' creates negativity in the statement, thus resulting in different communicative function. Viewed from its illocutionary act, it is classified as directive act with forbidding force (Searle, 1979; Yule, 1996).

Meanwhile, in SFL approach, despite their differences in terms of polarity, functionally, those two imperatives are applied by the participants with purpose of encoding the advice or opinion. Martin and Rose (2007, p.224) mentions that the command is used in order to demand good and service; it appears on the utterance 'Read Creswell' in which the participant demand the interlocutors the service.

Exclamative Mood

Next type of mood is exclamative. It is performed to express speakers' feelings. The example of clause containing exclamative mood is presented in the following datum.

- E : Don't forget, because a... you have to present your thesis next week.

- H : No. Tomorrow.
 All : Tomorrow? [laughing]
 D : *Poor you!*
 W : Oh my God!

The exclamative moods performed to express the expressive function of mocking. They are in elliptical form in which the WH elements, Finite, and Predicator are omitted. The complete ones are 'How poor you are'. Basically, the exclamative clause is used to encode the judgement. However, in this context, seen from the prior verbal talk laughing, this exclamative form is used to express a joke. All the exclamative moods from SFL perspectives are in the similar classification with the expressive acts by Searle (1979) as both have same communicative function: to express feelings.

Minor Clause (Non-Mood)

Other than the mood elements, there are also clauses containing no mood at all. It is not mood so these clause is called by Eggins and Slade (1997) as non-mood. Minor clause is one of them. Quantitatively, it is the second rank of the type of moods albeit the number is not so significant compared to the declarative moods. The underpinning reason is possibly thanks to the familiarity of the participants with the minor clause, since all the minor clauses found in the conversation are realized in the form of formulaic expressions (e.g.: 'Oh my God'). An example of the use of minor clauses expressed by the participants in the dialog is presented in the following datum.

- H : Actually I have prepared the worst the worst thing that that perhaps Pak Tom or or my friends criticize about my thesis project proposal tomorrow but um I have prepared a topic that will be my alternative I and also my thesis project proposal will be loved by everyone especially my advisor Pak Tom will love my topic.
 D : It would be too hard, I think.
 W, E, D: *Good luck.*

In the above datum, as shown in the italic fonts, the clause 'Good luck' is in the form of formulaic expression (Biber et al, 1999). It is used as emotional response to respond such other kind of speech function as statement (Martin & Rose, 2007, p.225). In the dialog, W, E, and D express minor clause, in the form of exclamation in response to D's statement 'It would be too hard, I think'. They clearly express sympathy, wishing that D will be able to perform better.

Non-Finite Clause (Non-Mood)

Second type of non-mood clause is non-finite clause. In this type of clause, there is no Finite existing (Morley, 2000). Instead, it has only Predicator and Complement. In addition to that, Eggins and Slade (1997) state that non-finite is rarely found in casual conversation. This statement is later confirmed by Biber et al (1999) based on their quantitative findings on corpus linguistic research.

- E : Hanson, I think what you can do is waiting for tomorrow's result. [laughing]
After being criticized by Pak Tom, you can decide whether you continue the thesis proposal you have done or - you know - take a new topic which is different at all from your proposal.
- D : Don't forget about your background knowledge.
- W : Remember you have...
- E : Duck farming program
- All : [laughing]

The non-finite clause in the dialog above is in the form of active participle 'being'. In traditional and structural grammar it is categorized not as clause as phrase. It is frequently called active participial phrase (Frank, 1972; Azar, 1993; Biber et al 1999). It more commonly exists in formal writing rather than speaking. Thus, in the conversation, only one datum is found. Other reason why this clause is rarely found is that it is rather difficult to perform spontaneously in conversation in foreign language settings. The speakers may have no much time to perform such complex syntactical structures.

Elliptical Clause

Next is the findings of the elliptical clause. This clause may contain mood. Indeed, this elliptical clauses tend to occur situationally in conversation. It is mostly caused by the fact that all the participants have already shared the same background knowledge, linguistically and culturally as exemplified in datum below.

- H : Do you guys have experience in qualitative research Dony?
- D : *Yes, I have. (a) In linguistics. (b) In linguistics, I analyze speech acts in high school teacher. It is not in casual conversation but in classroom conversation. (c) This is not so natural I think. I think it is quite hard, also, in terms of administration. You have to... (d)*
- H : *...get an access? (e)*
- D : *Yes, get an access to them. (f) You have to be able to face the headmaster. Some the f*****' headmasters. (g)*

By using utterance (a), D responds H's polarity interrogative utterance. Utterance (a) is sufficient in responding the interrogative utterance since both the participants have already understand the context. Also, the ellipsis occurs in case of brevity and rapidity in casual conversation. Since the participants are foreign language learners' this ellipsis may ease their production of utterances. They do not need to produce 'Yes, I have experience in qualitative research', 'It is in linguistics', 'but it is in classroom conversation', and 'You have to be able to face some f***in' headmaster' as long as the utterances are understandable. The constituents of the clauses can be traced from the prior clauses.

Other examples of ellipsis is in polar interrogative mood as exemplified in the following datum.

- E : because a... you have to present your thesis next week.
- H : No. Tomorrow
- All : *Tomorrow?* [laughing]

That single word can be traced from the full clause 'because a... you have to present your thesis next week'. The next utterance is also elliptical declarative from 'No I have to

present my thesis [proposal] tomorrow'. Therefore, the complete form of the italic clause might be 'Do you have to present your thesis [proposal] tomorrow'. Those two examples of omissions imply the rapidity and brevity the participants are willing to have. They are still one of the communication strategies used by learners in communicating with second or foreign language (Brown, 2007).

Incomplete Clause

This type of clause does not exist in such a full form and may be as a result of wrong syntactical pattern. For instance, utterances (d) that D produces in previous section are not elliptical, but incomplete. It is incomplete since the next participant H overlaps the turn. Therefore, utterance (d) and (e) are inseparable clause. Next, in utterance (f) the Subject and Finite 'You have to' are omitted. This can be traced from (d) and (e). Then, utterance (g) only presents the Complement since the Subject, Finite, and Predicator element are same with the previous clause.

The application of elliptical and incomplete clauses tends to be as a consequence of the difficulties in expressing utterances in English. The participants seemingly think a lot when trying to choose the grammatical and meaningful expressions. However, it can be a strategy for language learners to communicate in interlanguage such as second language, as Selinker has explained (Saville-Troike, 2006, p.41). That communication strategy can be included into avoidance strategies, one of which is message abandonment where the speaker "leaves a message unfinished because of language difficulties" (Brown, 2007, p.138)

On the other hand, the frequent usage of elliptical and incomplete clauses is seemingly because of the nature of conversation in terms of its brevity and rapidity. Additionally, these clause can possibly be as a result of participants' (lexico-grammatical) incompetence, because of which the participants provided the error correction on these incomplete clauses. It is mainly as a result of the participants' status as EFL learners whose English could be influenced by their local (Javanese) and national language (Bahasa Indonesia). The theoretical basis of this study is in fact based on the research in English native speakers in Australia by Eggins and Slade (1997). However as argued by Jennings (2009, p.101), SFL can be very helpful for language learners in order to build their language awareness; that language is communicatively meaningful rather than just syntactically correct. However, other study on mood system in SFL framework by Sutopo (2014) also found out that the Indonesian primary-level child, whose native language is Javanese, is capable of using the English mood system correctly and meaningfully because of the implementation of SFL approach in the language pedagogy in educational institution in the earlier age.

CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

From the findings and discussion, the researcher suggests several conclusions. First is that declarative moods were frequently performed by the participants in the simulated conversation. This is, functionally, due to speakers' tendency on the exchange of information. It may also indicate the levels of participants' competence in using simulated casual English in foreign language context. On the other hand, tagged declaratives were rarely used possibly as a consequence of speakers' grammatical incompetence. Next, despite being simulated, the conversation was actually designed to be as casual as possible; thus, the

conversation involves a lot of elliptical and incomplete clauses. Nevertheless, it is possible thanks to the speakers' linguistic incompetence or linguistic interference.

On the basis of these, the students, as the adult learners of English, indeed they are from English language and education department, must be completely aware of the English language they use. The form of the language reflects both explicit and implicit meaning, as the SFL deals with the language as a meaning-making system. It is also suggested that they need to improve their (lexico-)grammatical competences as this is still an essential of the communicative competences in support of 'higher' competence (e.g. discourse competence). Furthermore, such similar research may also be conducted in other language setting in Indonesia, e.g. Bahasa Indonesia or Javanese with several theoretical adaptations and modification. The scope of the study can also be enlarged by the addition of appraisal system usage.

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