



Modality analysis in Joe Biden's speech delivered on the anniversary of the Covid-19 shutdown

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 has been global health problem and become the concern of global leaders in the world. One of them is Joe Biden, current president of American. He delivered his speech on Anniversary Covid-19 Shutdown on March 11, 2021. The clauses in his speech contain modality. Modality is included in interpersonal meaning where language is used to encode interaction between the speaker and the hearer. This research aims to analyze the type of modality used by Biden in his speech and utilize it to find his self-representation. The research uses Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) in term of modality analysis as the tool and discourse analysis as the approach. The finding shows that three types of modalities found; inclination, probability and obligation. The self-representation of Biden found are being visionary, being determined, showing sadness, being powerful, and showing respect.

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1. Introduction

Corona virus has been pandemic for more than one year and affected many aspects of human's life. It has been the concern globally because most of countries in the world are infected by corona virus. Meanwhile, the disease that caused by this virus is called Coronavirus Disease of 2019 or Covid-19. There were many victims who died because of Covid-19. The medical and testing equipment to diagnose virus is still limited in many countries (Harchandani & Shome, 2021). In result, lockdown was enforced in every country to cut off the Covid-19 virus transmission. Covid-19

outbreak causes problems in every sector and it becomes a scourge for us (Junaedi, 2020). One of them is economic sector. It results the losing jobs, decreasing income, business closure, trade disruption as well as destruction of tourism, manufacturing, and transportation industry. It is not only public health crisis which affects the health of people, but it affects also the social aspect in which they cannot meet, gather, and hug one another since direct contact between people will cause virus transmission. Thus, government shuts down public spaces like restaurant, stores, schools, working place which leads to physical contact (Prawoto et al., 2020). This global pandemic becomes a “wake-up” call for global leaders such as president to handle this pandemic in their own country.

One of presidents who cares about this pandemic in his country is Joe Biden by giving speech on the anniversary of the Covid-19 shutdown. A speech is used as a medium to communicate information, power, and other contexts to public (Siregar, 2021). In his speech, Biden gave memory about how dark the life of his country during the pandemic, but there were still many positive sides that could be grateful for. Biden also invited his citizens to think positively that they can go through this pandemic together by endeavoring the vaccine, health protocol, and economic stability. Moreover, speech can change how people see an idea (Handayani, 2021). His speech is powerful and believed to give big impacts for American citizen. Biden himself is a political figure. Political figure's language can show his authority, dedication, persuasion, or encouragement (Kristianti, 2020). Biden's speech is used to speak up his opinion. It can also be a tool to persuade speaker's ideas in many issues like economic, politics, humanity, public health and other occasions (Sinaga, 2018).

Biden's speech is categorized as discourse. Discourse refers to language in context (Nunan, 1993). It means that analyzing the discourse cannot be separated from the context when and where it is produced, who speaks, to whom the speech is addressed. Discourse Analysis (DA) deals with not only written text but also spoken text like speech, interview, and conversation (Darong, 2021). DA presents to analyze message of the content in communication (Derin et al., 2020). Biden's speech is based on the context surrounds him where Covid-19 pandemic is still on going and many people lose their hopes because of it.

The language that Biden used shows his attitude towards Covid-19 issue. The language he used builds the interaction between him and the hearers. This fits with the function of language in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) named interpersonal metafunction. This metafunction uses language to enact with others (Hulu, 2019). Halliday also adds that speaking is considered “interact” because there is an exchange between speakers and hearers whether they give or demand information, goods, and services (Halliday, 1994). Thus, the meaning is considered from its function in social interaction process (Ardiansah, 2015). The grammatical features which carry interpersonal meanings are subject and finite in which they combine one and become the Mood (Butt et al., 2003). The finite shows polarity and modality. Modality encodes the speaker's beliefs and attitudes, opinion and point of view (Jannatussholihah & Triyono, 2020).

Modality is included in interpersonal metafunction. Language used by people includes interaction in which they take an action and respond to the act of giving or demanding for information or goods-and-services (Yuliana & Imperiani, 2017). The grammatical features that carry interpersonal meaning is Mood which contains Subject and Finite. The finite shows the tense and the modal. Thus, modality is included in interpersonal metafunction.

Modality does not refer to the event that is employed in the clause. It refers to the speaker's judgment as well as his or her attitude about the event expressed by the clause (Amalia et al., 2018). It means that the truth of a clause can be debatable or arguable.

There are two types of modalities: (1) modalization where the commodity that is exchanged is information, and (2) modulation where the commodity exchanged is good and service. Modalization includes probability of something happen and usuality or frequency of something happen, while modulation includes obligation, inclination, and necessity (Koutchade, 2015).

Modal has degrees and scales which signal higher or lower degree of certainty about the validity of proposition (Thompson, 2014). This modal value as the force of modal expression are divided into three ranges; high, median, and low (Xuan & Huang, 2017). Halliday gives the summarize of modal commitment as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Modal Values

	low	median	High
positive	can, may, could, might, (dare)	Will, would, should, is/was to	Must, ought to, need, has/had to
negative	needn't, doesn't/didn't, need to, have to	won't, wouldn't, shouldn't, (isn't/wasn't to)	mustn't, oughtn't to, can't, couldn't, (mayn't, mightn't, hasn't/hadn't to)

In this research, modality is utilized to find the self-representation of the speaker which is Joe Biden. It is suitable because modality shows what interaction that he wants to build with his citizens. Meaning to say, what image that he wants the audiences to see can be revealed using modality.

Pionery and Arina (2017) in their study analyzed Melania Trump's and Ivanka Trump's speeches. The finding showed that there were four types of modalities employed in Melania's speech; inclination, obligation, potentiality and ability, and probability, while in Ivanka Trump's speech, there were five types of modalities found: inclination, usuality, potentiality and ability, probability, and obligation. The two ideologies reflected from modality were commitments and self-promotion (Pionery & Arina, 2017). Other study is conducted by Amalia et al. (2018) that analyzed the domain mood and modality of interpersonal meaning in Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's speech. The finding showed that indicative and imperative type mainly found, the dominant mood was indicative type (95%) with dominant modal "can" (Amalia et al., 2018).

This research aims to find the modality used by Joe Biden in his speech on the anniversary of the Covid-19 Shutdown and utilized it to find the self-representation of Biden. This is worth studying because it analyzes the importance of the use of modality to see the self-representation.

2. Method

The object of the study was to analyze Joe Biden's speech delivered on the anniversary of Covid-19 shutdown on March 11, 2021. Joe Biden was inaugurated as the 46th president of America on January 20, 2021. He was accompanied in office by Vice President Kamala Harris. Biden entered

office amid the Covid-19 pandemic which became the worst disease in the world. For commemorating one year of Covid-19 shutdown, he delivered his speech. The speech about Covid-19 was taken because pandemic still happens and becomes the global concerns. This pandemic has not done. Moreover, Joe Biden who delivered the speech was chosen because his popularity in which he becomes the president of a big country like America. America influences other countries because of its economic and military power. The speech was taken from *Remarks by President Biden on the Anniversary of the COVID-19 Shutdown* (2021). The transcript was trusted because it was published by official website owned by White House Governor.

The type of the data was in the level of clause. The data taken was purposive sampling. The researcher selected the data which reached the requirement. The clause was taken if there was a modal in the clause and able to support the analysis of self-representation of the speaker. Thus, 63 clauses were included as the data.

There were two steps in collecting the data. First, the researcher found the transcript of the speech. Second, the researcher found the clause which contain modality and able to support the self-representation analysis. Moreover, there were three steps in analyzing the data. First, the researcher analyzed the type of modality. Second step was categorizing the modal into the form of table. Third step was analyzing the modal-values. Fourth step was interpreting the self-representation of Biden by relating the meaning of modal pattern to the context of the speech.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Types of modalities found in the speech

There are three types of modalities that are found in the speech. They are probability, inclination, and obligation. Usuality type is not found in the speech. Table 2 is the summarize of modality used in the speech.

Table 2. Modality Found in Biden's Speech

No	Types of Modality	Frequency			Total
		High	Median	Low	
1	Inclination	8	18	8	34
2	Probability	2	13	9	24
3	Obligation	4	1	-	5
					63

The data from Table 2 shows that the type of modality used the most is inclination. The second rank is probability. The last rank is obligation. Each type of modality is explained.

Inclination

Biden mostly used the median modal values to show inclination. Inclination means that the speaker offers the good and services to the hearers. In Biden's speech, the inclination found contains

willingness, ability, and determination of Biden. The rank of high and low modal values is the same. Below is the example.

We <i>will</i> deploy more mobile vehicles and pop-up clinics to meet you where you live.	Median	Being Determined
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The clause used median-level modal to show willingness of Biden to provide more public health mobiles which reach the remote areas. The use of *We* refers to Biden and his governmental staff, health services provider, and all people who help him in American Plan Rescue. It showed strong determination of Biden to reach that goal. He offered his service to help his people by providing more health facilities. He showed his strong effort to facilitate his citizen. He decided to do this plan, and he would not let anything to stop him. Another example is below.

I <i>will</i> do everything in my power.	Median	Being Determined
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The clause above shows strong willingness by Biden to do everything to help his country from Covid-19. He used median-level modal to show his willingness. It means that he was 50% willing to do everything for his country, but at the same time, he realized his capacity as human if there are some things that he is incapable to do that. Another example is below.

The things we used to do that always filled us with joy have become things we <i>couldn't</i> do and broke our hearts.	High	Showing Sadness
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The clause above used high-level which showed our disability to meet family. Biden said that gathering with our family gives us joys and happiness. This ability cannot be done anymore due to Covid-19 pandemic in which we have to keep the social distancing and do not have close and direct contact to everyone, especially older people that is easily infected by Covid-19. It showed that Biden was sad due to this disability. He also feels and experiences this disability. The last example is below.

Over a year ago, no one <i>could</i> have imagined what we were about to go through,	Low	Showing Sadness
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The clause used low-level modal which show their low ability to imagine what would happen to their country. They would not know that Covid-19 would bring them to the darkness of their lives in which they lost their jobs, lives, family members, happiness, and hopes to continue their lives. The subject *no one* shows that one year ago, all people, including Biden himself did not know about the progress of what was going on in his country and what possibility that happened during the one year ago. They only followed their fate.

Probability

Biden mostly used the median modal values to show prediction or probability of something happened. The low modal values exist in the speech, but the amount is still lower than the median.

He only used a few modals that have high commitment. Below is the example of probability used by Biden.

All adult Americans <i>will</i> be eligible to get a vaccine no later than May 1	Median	Being Visionary
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The clause above showed that Biden has future prediction about the vaccine of all adult Americans. He gave information to the hearers about vaccination. He had target to provide vaccine no later than May 1. His target was used to solve the Covid-19 problem in his country. He shared his vision or future plan with his audience using median-level modals. Another example is below.

You, your families and friends <i>will</i> be able to get together in your backyard or in your neighborhood and have a cookout and a barbecue and celebrate Independence Day.	Median	Being Visionary
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In the clause above, Biden used median-level modal to show future prediction as the good result of beating the virus. Biden displayed the result that they will get if they are successful in fighting the virus by providing vaccine for all American citizens. The result is they will be able to gather with their family, have party, and celebrate the Independence-day. In this clause, Biden showed his confidence by providing positive side of the successful in vaccination. Another example is below.

Our economy will be on the mend.	Median	Being Visionary
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The clause above showed Biden’s vision regarding future economy of American. The clause used median-level value about the future condition of American’ economy. Almost all countries in the world are affected economically due to Covid-19. Then, Biden showed probability of economic improvement that they will reach in the future. Another example is below.

You <i>can</i> drive up to a stadium or a large parking lot, get your shot, never leave your car and drive home in less than an hour.	Low	Being Visionary
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The clause above used low-level modal to talk about the easiness for American citizens to get vaccine. Different from other possibility, in this case Biden used low-level. It means that Biden was not too sure about what he said which was the easiness of getting vaccine. It was said that they can get vaccine without leaving their car. The process of vaccinating was predicted to be easy, fast, and simple. They did not have to go to the clinic, queue up, and spend lot of their times to register the administration. This easiness of vaccination was not highly predicted by Biden so there might be another possibility in which the vaccination was complex and long process. By using low-level modal, Biden thought about bad possibility that might happen also.

Obligation

Biden used mostly high-modal values in obligation type. This type shows the command in which Biden asked good and services or the action from the hearers. The example is below.

We <i>need</i> to remember the government isn't some foreign force in a distant capital	High	Being Powerful
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The clause above used high-modal value which contain commanding. Biden ordered his citizens to assume that the successful in beating the viruses are done by both government and citizens. Biden asked for citizens' self-awareness to participate in the successful of the mission. Biden wanted his citizens to be co-operative with the government in terms of doing their own tasks. The government will provide the vaccine and other facilities while citizen's duty is keeping the health protocol and following the guidance from the government so that the mission of stopping Covid-19 transmission can be achieved. Another example is below.

These two companies, competitors, have come together for the good of the nation, and they <i>should</i> be applauded for it	Median	Showing Respect
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Above example used median-level which commanded his citizens to appreciate everyone who contributes to the effort of solving Covid-19 problems, such as Johnson & Johnson and Merck. Even though, they are two big competitors, they work together to provide the vaccine to help their country. Biden showed his respect as well as his gratefulness to everyone including factories, doctor, nurses, health services providers, pharmacist, and others.

3.2 Self-Representation Reflected Through Modality

Being Visionary

Being visioner means having strong vision of the future. Even this vision is not always accurate, it is usually about positive hopes and ideas that possible to happen in the future. Biden shared his vision to his citizens as a stimulus for his citizens to actualize his plan together. Biden's visionary was shown by the use of possibility and inclination. The examples probability which shows vision shared by Biden are below.

- 1) *You, your families and friends will be able to get together in your backyard or in your neighbourhood and have a cookout and a barbecue and celebrate Independence Day.*
- 2) *This country will be vaccinated soon.*
- 3) *Our economy will be on the mend.*
- 4) *Our kids will be back in school.*

Those four clauses show the future prediction of Biden in which his country will get happy ending from their effort in which they get permission to have social gatherings, be vaccinated, have economic improvement and permission to open the schools in the future. His vision shows that he has positive outlook regarding their country's life.

Biden's vision also was shown by the use of inclination. The examples are below.

- 1) *We'll come together as one people, one nation, one America.*
- 2) *We'll come out stronger with a renewed faith in ourselves, a renewed commitment to one another, to our communities and to our country.*

These two clauses are considered as inclination because it shows Biden's willingness to stay with his citizens through the ups and downs of American's life. Besides that, it shows American's ability to be stronger because of this pandemic. Those inclinations show future vision believed by Biden. He believes that they will get positive results from this pandemic.

Being Determined

Being determined means that someone has decided to do something, and he or she does not let anyone or anything stop his or her action. Biden showed that he is being determined by the use of inclination. It means that he has strong will to finish their goal and mission. He is willing and committing himself to the mission that he has planned. The examples of Biden which shows his determination are below.

- 1) *I promise, I will do everything in my power.*
- 2) *I will not relent until we beat this virus.*

These two clauses above show strong willingness of Biden to do everything that he can to save his country from this pandemic. He committed himself to do actions that he thinks he is capable to do that. Another example is below.

- 3) *In the coming weeks and months, I'll be traveling along with the first lady, the Vice President, the second gentlemen, and members of my cabinet to speak directly to you, to tell you the truth about how the American Rescue Plan meets the moment.*

This clause shows his determination to visit his citizens. He is willing to meet his citizen to socialize his plan to rescue America from pandemic. He does not cover the truth. He is willing to tell the truth about his planning and everything that happened including progress of their work. He wants to have close and direct contact with his citizens. The last example is below.

- 4) *Secondly, at the time when every adult is eligible in May, we will launch with our partners new tools to make it easier for you to find the vaccine and where to get the shot.*

This clause shows his determination of easiness and simplicity of getting the vaccine. Biden has determined that everything about the vaccine will be an easy process for his citizen. Biden has planned the website which provides information about vaccine. Biden shows his seriousness to handle this pandemic.

Showing Sadness

Since this speech was delivered on the one-year anniversary of Covid-19 shutdown, Biden also shows his sadness and condolences about what has happened. They lose many lives, jobs, happiness and hopes. It is shown using probability and inclination. The examples are below.

- 1) *The things we used to do that always filled us with joy have become things we couldn't do and broke our hearts.*

The example above shows what they cannot do during the pandemic. Biden recalled his sadness resulting from Covid-19 in which he could not have direct contact with his family. He lost his social activity which makes him and his citizens happy. He shared his sorrow to the hearers.

- 2) *The scientists have made clear that things may get worse again as new variants of the virus spread.*

The example above shares Biden's sadness of this uncertainty situation in which bad or worst condition may come again to them.

Being Powerful

Biden as president also shows that he is powerful by the use of obligation. The examples are below.

- 1) Look, we know what we need to do to beat this virus.
- 2) We need to remember the government isn't some foreign force in a distant capital.

Those clauses used high-level modal of obligation in which Biden ordered his citizens to support his mission by doing their own tasks. He asked his citizens to work together, follow the scientist, and put trust and faith in government. The successfulness of beating the virus will be done by both government and citizens, not only by government itself. If the government has done their duties while the citizens do not follow the health protocol, everything will be fruitless.

Showing Respect

Biden shows his respect using obligation in which he ordered his citizens to appreciate everyone who contributes to solve the pandemic like Johnson & Johnson and Merck. The example is below.

These two companies, competitors, have come together for the good of the nation, and they should be applauded for it.

He also appreciated the works of doctor, scientist, pharmacist, institution and also his citizens which have worked with him to beat the virus.

The study of modality in Joe Biden's speech also was done by Darong (2021). He analyzed interpersonal function in Joe Biden's victory speech. He included the discussion of mood and pronoun while this research only focused on the modality itself. The findings of this research can support

his findings. His results showed that there are 4 modality types found: inclination, ability, obligation and expectation. This research found inclination, probability, and obligation. Both of research have the same findings in which inclination type and modal *will* appeared the most. However, different topic of speech has different strategy. If Biden talked about Covid-19 anniversary shutdown, he used more modal varieties such as *could*, *should*, *need to*, and *could not*. The findings of self-representation in this research also support his findings. In both speech (victory and Covid-19 anniversary speech), Biden showed his image of being visionary, determined, and respectful. Biden shows his hope about the future, strong will to finish the goal, close relationship between him and his people, and call on the audience to take an action (Darong, 2021). However, in victory speech, he did not show his sadness self-image. In Covid-19 anniversary speech, he shows his deep condolence and grief of what has happened. Even though he delivered different topics, the self-representation of a president to lead and bring a country to the future hope presented in both topics. In victory speech, he showed his commitment to stay there through the challenge while in Covid-19 pandemic, he proved and continued his commitment.

4. Conclusion

Investigating modality used by the speaker in his choice of words is able to reveal the self-representation of the speaker. Biden in his speech used probability, inclination and obligation types in which inclination has mostly used by Biden. In probability and inclination, the median modal values are mostly used while in obligation, the high modal-values are mostly used. From analyzing the modality, the self-representation of Biden is reflected. They are being visionary, being determined, showing sadness, being powerful, and showing respect. The speech analysis on modality used by Biden is worth studying because it enables us to know what interaction that he wants to build with his citizens by seeing at his representation that he shows to the hearers.

This study is suggested to be continued in which the use of transitivity system by Biden in this speech. The ideologies or experiences can be found using transitivity.

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