A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION
OF INTERPERSONAL MEANINGS IN MALAY HELP-
SEEKING AND HELP-PROVIDING TEXTS

DIA WIDYAWATI AMAT

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR

2015
A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF INTERPERSONAL MEANINGS IN MALAY HELP-SEEKING AND HELP-PROVIDING TEXTS

DIA WIDYAWATI AMAT

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LINGUISTICS

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA KUALA LUMPUR

2015
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: Dia Widyawati bt Amat   (I.C/Passport No: 860727-23-5338)
Registration/Matric No: TGC090049
Name of Degree: Master of Linguistics
A Systemic Functional Linguistic Investigation of Interpersonal Meanings in Malay Help-seeking and Help-providing Texts
Field of Study: Systemic Functional Linguistics

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:
(1) I am the sole author/writer of this Work;
(2) This Work is original;
(3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any excerpt or extract from, or reference to or reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the Work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this Work;
(4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor do I ought reasonably to know that the making of this work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;
(5) I hereby assign all and every rights in the copyright to this Work to the University of Malaya (“UM”), who henceforth shall be owner of the copyright in this Work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained;
(6) I am fully aware that if in the course of making this Work I have infringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise, I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

Candidate’s Signature  Date:

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

Witness’s Signature  Date:
Name:  
Designation:
ABSTRACT

The current study is about a Systemic Functional Linguistic analysis of interpersonal meanings in Malay advice columns. Helper-helpee relationships, judgments and attitudes are identified by looking at the system of Mood and Modality in the advice columns. Many studies investigating English advice column has been found (McCabe, 2005; Asera, Bagarukayo, Shuey & Barton, 1997; Locher, 2006; Kistnasamy, 2006; Jackson, 2005; Gies, 2004; Liao & Liao, 2009; Shaidatul, 2012) but the ones grounded in SFL are still few (Wong, 2009; Zeng, 2009) whereas the study of advice column in Malay language using SFL has not been found. This shows that studying interpersonal meanings in advice columns in Malay from the perspective of SFL is relatively new and deserves studies on its own. Therefore, the current study intends to fill the gap by exploring the Mood and Modality system in Malay advice columns which function as help-seeking and help-providing texts. The current study is a qualitative study (Creswell, 2009) with qualitative and quantitative findings (Silverman, 2006) following the tradition of research in SFL. The data consist of 10 help-seeking texts and 10 help-providing texts which are taken from 10 sets of letters featured in the advice columns of a Malay health magazine, ‘Rapi’. The study was carried out by integrating Halliday’s Mood and Modality theoretical framework (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) with Asmah’s (2008) model for Modus and Kata Kerja Modalitas. The findings show that both texts are highly declarative while interrogative and imperative mood are used minimally. Help-seekers use mainly the declarative mood to provide background to their problems while help-providers use mainly the declarative mood to be approachable and to create provocation. As for modality, help-providers use more features of modality than help-seekers to compensate for the lack of authoritativeness caused by indirectness when giving advice.
ABSTRAK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Entirely Merciful. Alhamdulillah.
Thank you Allah.

First and foremost, my heartfelt gratitude goes to the person who has introduced me
to the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics which was very alien to me at that
time. That person, Dr Sridevi Sriniwass, has continued to nurture my interest in this
theory and encouraged to keep paddling at times when I thought of giving up. Most
importantly, thank you very much for putting up with me this whole while.

Not forgetting, special thanks to my parents Amat bin Karmain and Masria bt Abd
Hamid who have sacrificed a lot for my journey of seeking higher knowledge. The
countless support and prayers have been my pillar of strength. My appreciation also
goes to my siblings, Ema Malini, Kini Sakina, Oni Sauma and Mohd Anas who have
covered me up relentlessly through the hard times. Thank you also for understanding
that I might not be able to come home often. Thank you for giving me space and
reminding me to take a break. I can’t thank all of you enough.

My supportive friends, Haniza bt Sarijari, Rawaidah bt Saiful Islam, Diana bt
Othman, Siti Zarikh Sofiah bt Abu Bakar, Syazwa Nabila bt Mohd Raidzuan and
Zuraidah bt Sumery. I am so grateful to meet this bunch of friends with
incomprehensible characters yet very dependable and comforting. You have seen me
falter. You are the place I go to when I just want to be whiny and complain a lot. You
are the place I go to when I just need to cry and say nothing else.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of UiTM Cawangan Johor and staff
of FBL Universiti Malaya for the precious cooperation given. Not forgetting, everyone
else who has contributed to this journey. I cannot name each person but I am deeply
grateful to be granted with assistance from everyone.

May this journey make me a better person. Insya Allah.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... iii
Abstrak ............................................................................................................................................ iv
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................... vi
List of Figures .................................................................................................................................... x
List of Tables ...................................................................................................................................... xi
List of Symbols and Abbreviations ................................................................................................. xii
List of Appendices .......................................................................................................................... xiii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................... 1

1.1 Background of The Study ......................................................................................................... 1
  1.1.1 Research Area ..................................................................................................................... 1

1.2 Statement of Problem .............................................................................................................. 2
  1.2.1 Advice Column As A Form of Helping ............................................................................. 2
  1.2.2 Advice Column As A Form of Media Discourse ................................................................. 5
  1.2.3 Interpersonal Meanings in Advice Columns ....................................................................... 8
  1.2.4 SFL in Malay Language .................................................................................................. 9

1.3 Significance of The Study ....................................................................................................... 10

1.4 Research Question ................................................................................................................ 11

1.5 Delimitations ......................................................................................................................... 11

1.6 Chapter Summary .................................................................................................................. 12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction........................................................................................................13

2.1 Halliday's SFL..................................................................................................13

   2.1.1 SFL Research in English .................................................................16
   2.1.2 SFL Research in European Languages .................................20
   2.1.3 SFL Research in Asian Languages ..........................................22

2.2 Research into The Mood and Modality ....................................................23

   2.2.1 Analysis of English Text .............................................................23
   2.2.2 Analysis of European Languages Text .................................26
   2.2.3 Analysis of Asian and Middle Eastern Languages Text .........27

2.3 Chapter Summary...........................................................................................30

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction....................................................................................................31

3.1 Theoretical Framework.................................................................................31

   3.1.1 Mood and Modality - English,..................................................32
      3.1.1.1 Elements in Clause Structure - SFPCA.............................33
      3.1.1.2 Mood Type Identification .............................................34
      3.1.1.3 Modality Identification..................................................35

   3.1.2 Mood and Modality – Malay...............................................................37
      3.1.2.1 Subject-Predicate (Subjek-Predikat) Identification.........37
      3.1.2.2 Mood Type (Modus) Identification...............................39
      3.1.2.3 Modality (Kata Kerja Modalitas) Identification.............39
3.1.3 Adaptation of Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004) and Asmah’s (2008) Models

3.1.3.1 Mood Type Identification

3.1.3.2 Modality Identification

3.2 Research Methodology

3.2.1 Data Description

3.2.2 Research Design

3.3 Sample Analysis

3.4 Chapter Summary

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

4.1 Data Analysis and Discussion on Mood Choices

4.1.1 Mood Choice in Help-Seeking Texts

4.1.2 Mood Choice in Help-Providing Texts

4.2 Modality Features in Help-Seeking and Help-Providing Texts

4.2.1 Modality Features in Help-Seeking Texts

4.2.2 Modality Features in Help-Providing Texts

4.3 Discussion of Findings

4.4 Chapter Summary
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction........................................................................................................116
5.1. Summary of The Main Findings.......................................................................117
5.1.1. Mood Choice of Help-Seeking and Help-Providing Texts.......................117
5.1.2. Modality Features of Help-Seeking and Help-Providing Texts..............119
5.2. Implications of The Findings..........................................................................121
5.3. Suggestions for Future Research....................................................................121
5.4. Chapter Summary............................................................................................122

References..............................................................................................................123
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Dimension of The SFL Model.........................................................14

Figure 2.2: A System Network of Mood Choices.............................................15

Figure 3.1: Mood Type in SFL.................................................................34

Figure 3.2: System Network of Modality.....................................................35

Figure 3.3: Process in The Research Design................................................51

Figure 4.1: Percentages of Mood Types in Help-Seeking Texts......................61

Figure 4.2: Percentages of Mood Types in Help-Providing Texts....................70

Figure 4.3: Modality Use in Help-Seeking Texts...........................................83

Figure 4.4: Modality Use in Help-Providing Texts.......................................95
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: The Kinds of Meanings in A Clause..................................................15

Table 3.1: Four Basic Speech Roles.................................................................32

Table 3.2: Mood Identification........................................................................35

Table 3.3: Modal Operators According to Ranks..............................................36

Table 3.4: Phrases That Do Not Function As A Subject ...................................37

Table 3.5: Predicate formed by A Verbal Phrase, Noun Phrase, Adjectival Phrase and Prepositional Phrase .................................................................38

Table 3.6: The Subsystems of Kata Kerja Modalitas........................................39

Table 3.7: Mood Type Based on Subject-Predicate Analysis..........................41

Table 3.8: The Coding of Features to Be Analyzed........................................43

Table 3.9: Advice Columns According to Themes and Experts.......................46

Table 3.10: Modality Realisations Analysis....................................................52

Table 4.1 Modality Use in Help-Seeking Texts...............................................81

Table 4.2 Distribution of Mood Adjuncts in Help-Seeking texts.......................84

Table 4.3 Ranked Modal Finites in Malay.........................................................93

Table 4.4 Mood Adjuncts in Help-providing Texts.........................................95

Table 5.1 Suggested Ranks for Malay Modal Operators.................................115
LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

For example:

HS : Help-seeking
HP : Help-providing
C  : Clause
^  : Followed by
[ ] : Ellipsed Subject
LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A-13D (Enclosed in CD) ....................................................128