

Modality in Greta Thunberg's Speech

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Abstract. This research aims to describe the types of modality used in Greta Thunberg's speech and to reveal the meaning of the realizations. This research used a descriptive qualitative method by applying theory of modality by Halliday and Matthiessen. The data source of this research is Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris regarding climate crisis issue. The data of this research were all kinds of modality that were found in Greta Thunberg's speech. The result showed that there were two types of modalization found consisting of probability and usuality and two types of modulation consisting of obligation and inclination. Based on the data, there were 51 cases of modality in 40 clauses in the speech found. There were 27 (52.9%) modalizations found. It shows that the speaker is more inclined to convey statement form of information to inspire the listener. Also, there were 24 (47.1%) modulations found. It shows that the speaker asks the listener to do something. From the speech of Greta Thunberg, it can be concluded that the speaker used the type of modalization more. It means that the speaker is more inclined to raise thought to inspire than command to the listener.

Keyword: *Modality, Modalization, Modulation, Realization*

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1. Introduction

Speech is a kind of spoken language using words or language effectively. It is also a skill in choosing words which can affect the listener. The person who does speech is always related with the crowds, which can be delivered on a podium or not (Syam, 2004:7). It is an utterance with a good arrangement to be delivered to the people. In speech, the speaker must be able to master the audience and successfully convey their idea so that it can be accepted by others (Keraf, 2004:35). The examples of speech are welcome speech of a big day, event speech, motivational speech, etc. Speech is also the vocalized form of human communication. Each spoken word is created out of the phonetic combination of a limited set of vowel and consonant speech sound units. Speech can

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influence the listener about what the speaker is talking about. When speaker gives speech, he/she will use modalization and modulation to deliver messages in simply understandable words. Speaker makes her speech represent of expressing something in different by using modalization and modulation in modality. For example, in the sentence *And I believe that the biggest danger is not our inaction*, the speaker uses the word *believe* which is included in probability of modalization. The word *believe* here is categorized mainly as modal operator.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:176) state that modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between *yes* or *no*. The intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity. Halliday also states that modality is the speaker's judgment of the probabilities, usualities, obligation or the inclination involved in what the people saying. Modality contains consideration, perspective, attitude or judgment of the addresser to the information or goods and service which are realized by way of statement, question, offer, and command (Suhadi, 2011:156-179). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:147) divided modality into two types. They are propositions and proposals which are also known as modalization and modulation. Modalization is divided into two parts. They are Probability (*maybe, possibly, probably, certainly*) and Usuality (*sometimes, never, always, often*). Modulation is also divided into two parts. They are Obligation (*have to*) and Inclination (*wants to*).

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) state that modalization is one part of the grammatical areas of modality. When modality is used to argue about the probability or frequency of proposition, it is referred as modalization. Modalization is always expressing the implicit judgment of the speaker because it is the way the speaker getting into the text expressing a judgment about certainty, likelihood, or frequency of something happening or being. Modalization involves the expression of probability and usuality. Probability occurs when there is an expression of judgment to the likelihood or probability of something happens. For example, *Of course, that number is much lower today*. Usuality occurs when there is an expression of judgments to the frequency of something happens. For example: *Once you realize how fast it is disappearing*.

The other type of modality is modulation. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) refer modulation as the way speaker express their judgments or attitudes about actions and events. When a clause is used to exchange goods and services, it refers to the proposal. This speech function can be realized by command and offer. It has two types, obligation and inclination. Obligation occurs when the speaker gives command, suggestion, demand, and advice to the listener. For example: *And then we **might** no longer be able to undo the irreversible climate breakdown*. Inclination represents the tendency of speaker in doing something, and the capability of his or her feeling. For example: *Because no one else **wants to** or dare to*.

Modulation is not always represented by command and structure clause. As a part of interpersonal realization, modulation always deals with demanding, direction, advice, permission, undertaking or capability. Modulation deals with expression of asking, directing or expression of our willingness to get somebody to do something. These can realize into asking for someone, offering declarative statement, advice statement, or even direct imperative statement.

Modalization and modulation are important to analyze. Since modalization and modulation are important parts of clause exchange, it is important to analyze how modalization and modulation impact the meaning of language, especially in speech. The use of modality in speech will influence the audiences to understand the purpose of the speech. Analyzing modality in a speech aims to find out whether the speaker is more likely to use modalization (probability and usuality), or modulation (obligation and inclination). Also, it can find out how the speaker gives advice, commands, suggestions, and willingness. Furthermore, the difference in the lexico-grammar analysis and the speech function of the clauses are due to the need to get the readers persuaded (Bankole & Ayoola, 2014).

This research only concerns about modalization and modulation. It aims to find out the meanings in Greta Thunberg's remarkable speech at the National Assembly in Paris in using modality regarding the types of modality used and the realizations. Greta Thunberg is a Swedish environmental activist who has gained International recognition for promoting the view that humanity is facing an existential crisis arising from climate change. Thunberg is known for her youth and her straight forward speaking manner both in public and to political leaders and assemblies, in which she criticizes world leaders for their failure to take sufficient action to address the climate crisis. She is also known for her other achievements, such as being chosen as as the *Person of the Year* for the 2019 leading version of TIME magazine, one of the winners of the *Svenska Dagbladet* debate article writing competition on climate for young people in May 2018, one of the 25 most influential teenagers in the world in 2018 by TIME magazine, and nominated for the *Nobel Peace Prize 2019* by the Norwegian government as the Nobel organizer. She is said to have inspired millions of young people around the world to take action in the face of climate change.

On July 23rd, 2019, Greta delivered a remarkable speech in Paris regarding climate crisis issue. She bravely spoke out the truth condition of the earth nowadays, not only shared the truth issue Thunberg also frankly mocked the audiences who are government from several countries, business leaders and politicians that they are having no concerns to help this earth from extinction due to the mound of carbon dioxide.

The researcher was interested in analyzing Greta's speech because almost all of her speeches discuss climate which is very influential for the environment. The speeches she delivered were considered to inspire many people and also the world. She was young, but her speeches and actions had greatly influenced many people. For her action that inspired millions of people from all over the world, Greta was nominated for the *Nobel Peace Prize 2019* by the Norwegian government as the Nobel organizer. The action received a positive response and also attracted the attention of many people in various countries taking to the streets to support what Thunberg was fighting for. She succeeded in making people aware that the climate crisis was real.

The researcher chose speech from Greta Thunberg, namely the speech at the National Assembly in Paris. It was because it is necessary to know the systematic use of the type to help more people to consider speech contents. The researcher thought that analyzing speech can create influence the listener on how the listener is sure about something the speaker says. Also, it is interesting to study modality in speech because it can show how the speaker uses modalization and modulation to suggest other people or how the speaker gives opinion of something. It may also help people to show their willingness of doing something.

2. Research Method

This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative method and used theory of Modality in Systemic Functional Linguistics to analyze modalization and modulation in speech. The source of data of this research was Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris. The speech was delivered in English consist of fourteen paragraphs and five pages. The text of the speech was downloaded from <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2019/12/02/speech-at-the-national-assembly-in-paris-july-23-2019/>. The data of the research were all kinds of modality found in clauses of Greta Thunberg's speech.

The steps of collecting the data in this research are (1) downloading the video and the transcriptions of Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris on the internet, (2) watching the video of the speech, (3) reading and checking the transcriptions of the speech, (3) dividing the texts of transcription into some clauses by reading and finding the meaning of the speech with the objectives of this study, and (5) classifying the clauses based on the types of modality supported by Halliday and Matthiessen's theory (2014).

In analyzing the data, the researcher used data analysis technique proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). It consists of Data Condensation, Data Display, and Drawing and Verifying Conclusion. In Data Condensation, the researcher did selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data. In Data Display, the data were classified into modality

types (modalization (probability, usuality) and modulation (obligation, inclination)) in the table and the realizations of the modality used in Greta Thunberg's speech were shown. In Drawing and Verifying Conclusion, the researcher made conclusion after completely identifying types of modality and to find out the realization of nominalization used in the speech.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

Table 1. Modality Used in Greta Thunberg's Speech

No.	Type	Degree	Number and Percentage	Total		
1.	Modalization	Probability	High	9 (17.6%)	27 (52.9%)	
			Medium	8 (15.7%)		20 (39.2%)
			Low	3 (5.9%)		
	Usuality	High	0 (0%)	7 (13.7%)		
		Medium	1 (1.9%)			
		Low	6 (11.8%)			
2.	Modulation	Obligation	High	6 (11.8%)	24 (47.1%)	
			Medium	11 (21.5%)		20 (39.2%)
			Low	3 (5.9%)		
	Inclination	High	0 (0%)	4 (7.9%)		
		Medium	4 (7.9%)			
		Low	0 (0%)			
Total				51 (100%)		

Based on the findings of the research, there were found 40 clauses which contain of modality. There were 51 cases of modality found in Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris. There were 27 (52.9%) modalizations found. It shows that the speaker is more inclined to convey statement form of information to inspire the listener. Also, there were 24 (47.1%) modulations found. It shows that the speaker asks the listener to do something. It can be concluded that Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris is more inclined to raise thought to inspire than command to the listener. She also gives advice, suggestion, and willingness.

Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that the highest number of modality in the speech was modalization. This is supported by the number of probability which was 20 (39.2%) cases. It

shows the prediction and presumption of the speaker that had happened, is happening, or will happen in the future. Besides, the number of the usuality type was 7 (13.7%) cases in the speech. Usuality in a high degree expresses something that is done or felt by someone almost all the time. Usuality in a low degree expressing or feels something that she never or almost never did. In the other side, there were 20 (39.2%) cases with obligation type in the speech. Obligation is usually used to ask someone to do something, to give advice, suggestion, and ask permission. Also, there were 4 (7.9%) cases with inclination type in the speech. Inclination used by the speaker expresses willingness and ability or readiness.

There were some clauses in Greta Thunberg's speech that used combination of modalization and modulation. She used two types in one clause found in her speech, like in *And that would most certainly save countless of human lives*. It can be seen that she used the word *would* to indicate of obligation type in medium degree and the word *certainly* indicate of probability in high degree. In this case, Greta Thunberg did not always use one type when speaking, but sometimes she used two types. The researcher found the speaker express modality depends on finite modal operator, modal adjunct, both together (modal operator and modal adjunct), expansion of the predicator: typically by a passive verb and an adjective.

To sum up, modality is very important in a speech to get to know how the speakers can influence the listeners to be interested in their speech through the words they use. The words they use can create negative and positive actions for listeners.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Modalization

3.2.1.1 Probability

Probability type is used by the speaker to express judgments or prediction of something that happened, is happening or will happen in the future. The data examples with the type of probability that were found in Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris can be seen below.

*As a small number of people have been saying lately, **will not** end in 11 years.* (Clause 2)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the phrase *will not*. The phrase is the modality in the clause. It is included in probability type of modalization and has medium degree. Also, it is categorized as finite modal operator.

*And **of course** that number is much lower today.* (Clause 7)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the phrase *of course*. The phrase is the modality in the clause. It is included in probability type of modalization and has high degree. Also, it is categorized as modal adjunct.

Or maybe you are simple not mature enough to tell it like it is. (Clause 9)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *maybe*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in probability type of modalization and has low degree. Also, it is categorized as finite modal operator.

Or think that we are extreme. (Clause 13)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *think*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in probability type of modalization and has medium degree. Also, it is categorized as modal adjunct.

I believe that the biggest danger is not our inaction. (Clause 31)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *believe*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in probability type of modalization and has high degree. Also, it is categorized as modal adjunct.

3.2.1.2 Usuality

Usuality type is used by the speaker to expresses the often or frequency of something happens. It occurs when someone express something that he or she does most of the time. The data examples with the type of usuality that were found in Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris can be seen below.

That amount of carbon dioxide will run out in about 12 years of current business as usual. (Clause 16)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *usual*. The word *usual* is the modality in the clause. It is included in usuality type of modalization and has medium degree. Also, it is categorized as modal adjunct.

I ask you once again. (Clause 38)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *once*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in usuality type of modalization and has low degree. Also, it is categorized as modal adjunct.

3.2.2 Modulation

3.2.2.1 Obligation

Obligation type is used by the speaker to ask someone to do something, to ask permission and to give advices. The data examples with the type of obligation that were found in Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris can be seen below.

*We **might** no longer be able to undo the irreversible climate breakdown.* (Clause 4)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *might*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in obligation type of modulation and has low degree. Also, it is categorized as finite modal operator.

*The bad guys who **have to** tell people these uncomfortable things.* (Clause 10)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the phrase *have to*. The phrase is the modality in the clause. It is included in obligation type of modulation and has high degree. Also, it is categorized as finite modal operator.

*Why you **should** we do that.* (Clause 17)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *should*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in obligation type of modulation and has medium degree. Also, it is categorized as modal adjunct.

*Aiming instead for below 1.5 degrees **would** significantly reduce the climate impacts.* (Clause 24)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *would*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in obligation type of modulation and has medium degree. Also, it is categorized as finite modal operator.

*We **must** ask ourselves.* (Clause 34)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the word *must*. The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in obligation type of modulation and has high degree. Also, it is categorized as finite modal operator.

3.2.2.2 Inclination

Inclination type is used by the speaker expresses willingness and ability or readiness. The data examples with the type of inclination that were found in Greta Thunberg's speech at the National Assembly in Paris can be seen below.

I will start with the good news. (Clause 1)

The clause above, the speaker uses the word "*will*". The word is the modality in the clause. It is included in inclination type of modulation and has medium degree. Also, it is categorized as finite modal operator.

No one else wants to or dares to. (Clause 11)

In the clause above, the speaker uses the phrase *wants to*. The phrase *wants to* is included in inclination type of modulation and has medium degree. Also, it is categorized as passive verb.

4. Conclusion

From the analysis, there were two types of modality found. They were modalization (probability and usuality) and modulation (obligation and inclination). In the speech, there were 51 cases of modality in 40 clauses found. There were 27 (52.9%) modalizations found. It shows that the speaker is more inclined to convey statement form of information to inspire the listener. Also, there were 24 (47.1%) modulations found. It shows that the speaker asks the listener to do something. From the speech, it can be concluded that Greta Thunberg as the speaker used the type of modalization more. It means that the speaker is more inclined to raise thought to inspire than command to the listener.

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