

# Mental Process Found in Donald Trump's Speech on Covid 19: Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach

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**Abstract.** This research deals with mental process were found in Donald Trump's speech. Mental process was used to express people's feeling, thinking, perceiving shows other desire toward things in life. With these mental productions, humans can express their view, ideas, and a feeling to public through speech. As in Donald Trump's speech on his presidential speech in addressing the outbreak of COVID-19 in his country. The language used in his speech determines the success of communication with the participant since language express speaker feeling, idea and desire. This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative research. The data were obtained from Donald Trump's speech and source of the data were the script of Donald Trump's speech on March 11, 2020 about the coronavirus. The data were collected by documentary sheet. The data analysis used interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The findings show that 1) there were 39 utterances that contained of mental process were found in Donald Trump's speech, namely 17 (43.6%) for cognition, 11 (28.2%) for desiderative, 7 (17.9%) for affection, and 4 (10.3%) for perception. The highest type of mental process in Donald Trump's speech was cognition. It means that Trump provided his insight to American people about the corona virus in order to make them to be calm in facing the outbreak. It reflected the way of he logically thinks.

**Keyword:** *SFL, Transitivity, Trump, Mental Process*

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## 1 Introduction

In Systemic Functional Linguistics or Functional Grammar, there are three metafunctions discussed, one of them is Clause as Representations or System of Transitivity. [1] states that when people talk about what a word or a sentence *means*, it is this kind of meaning that they have in mind – meaning in the sense of content. The meaning is conveyed through clauses as the grammatical units. It is the clause that functions as the representation of processes in. This leads to the system of transitivity where it specifies the different types of Process that are recognized

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in the language and the structure by which they are expressed. The processes themselves consist of three components: process, participant and circumstance. [1] stated that process is used to refer in general to goings-on like going, happening, seeing, feeling, and thinking. Process is determined by verb. Traditionally, verb can be described as group of words that expresses an action, an event, or a state. Next, participant is a term used to refer in general to entities involved in processes. Moreover, [2] mentions six processes in functional grammar, namely a) Material Process: Process of doing and causing, both voluntarily and involuntarily, b) Mental Process: Process of perceiving, thinking, feeling, c) Verbal Process: Process of saying, d) Relational Process: Process of being and becoming, e) Existential Process: Process of existing, and f) Behavioural Process: Process of physiological and psychological behavior.

This study focus on the mental process is chiefly triggered by the very fact that this process type according to systemic linguists bears on the assumptions of the participants. In general, there are two participants in mental process, namely Senser and Phenomenon. Senser is someone that senses something and Phenomenon is something that which is sensed. For example:

(1) *You like ice cream.*

(2) *She didn't remember what happened last night.*

In sentence (1), we have *You* as Senser and *ice cream* as Phenomenon. The verb used *like* is in positive form. On the other hand, in sentence (2) we can see the word *remember* as the verb used is in negative form. Therefore, we have *what happened last night* as Phenomenon and *she* as Senser.

Mental processes are processes of sensing. This means that mental process involve the clause of feeling, thinking, and perceiving [3]. Furthermore, mental processes are concerned with our experience of the world of our own conciseness. In mental process, the processes are realized by four categories, namely 1) cognition includes processes such as thinking, knowing, and understanding, for example *I don't know him*. 2) Affection includes processes such as liking, loving, and fearing, for example *I hate that dog*. 3) Perception includes processes such as seeing, and hearing, for example *Nina heard the ghost's voice*. And 4) desiderative includes expressing desire such as want, desire, hope, decide, and determine, for example *they want finish this study in this year*. Elements in mental processes are senser, process, and phenomenon. Senser which is defined as a conscious being and phenomenon as the one which is sensed are participant roles in mental processes. Types of phenomenon vary from thing, act, fact, and idea. Fact and idea are usually projection which have role as phenomenon in mental process. In perceptive type, it is usually found act qualifier which can be divided into perfective and imperfective type of embedded clause. In cognitive, the phenomena found are thing and idea

(representation of the content of thinking). Meanwhile, desiderative usually contains phenomenon in the form of thing and idea. At last, emotive has phenomenon of thing and projected idea of fact.

Mental clauses are used in expressing people's feeling, thinking, perceiving shows other desire toward things in life. With these mental productions, humans can express their view, ideas, and feelings to public through speech. As in Donald Trump's speech on his presidential speech in addressing the outbreak of COVID-19 in his country. A speech conducted by a President Trump is not ordinary since it takes attention not only for Americans' society but also the whole world [4] and [5]. No wonder that language choice he used has vital role. The language used in his speech determines the success of communication with the participant since language express speaker feeling, idea and desire. However, what Trump has been facing so far is different from what his ancestors had experienced. Despite his paranoid and narcissist personality as well as his continuous behavior as the sole source of power and the only rescuer, the president is heavily facing the dire consequences of flouting the virus. Trump and his administration underestimated Covid-19 and thought that they can contain it, only to discover their inability of dealing with the new enemy. This time the enemy is Covid-19, created for covering Trump's catastrophic failure in containing the virus. The attack on China comes at a time when it is seen crowding out US as a political leader due to its considerable economic power in the Middle East as well as in the African and European continents.

By the understanding the background of the study above, the problems of the study was formulated into the questions as the following:

1. What types of mental process are used in Donald Trump's Speech on Covid 19?
2. How are mental process realized in Donald Trump's Speech on Covid 19?

## 2 Review of Literature

[3] stated that transitivity is the meaning of clauses, which represent patterns of experience". The system of transitivity belongs to the experiential meta-function and is the overall grammatical resource for construing goings on. Transitivity system belongs to experiential metafunctions. [6] stated that transitivity is normally understood as the grammatical feature which indicates if a verb takes a direct object. When we look at the experiential metafunctions, we are looking at the grammar of the clause as representation. It is called so because the clause in its experiential function is a way of representing pattern of experience. Through the system of transitivity, we can explore the clause in its aspects such is:

Who = does = what = to = whom, when, where, why or how
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Furthermore, [7] state that transitivity is a complex phenomenon involving both semantic and syntactic component. There are three semantic categories which are explained in general way how phenomenon of the real world are represented as linguistics structures. They are circumstances (the circumstance (s) realized by (an) adverbial group(s), process (the process is realized by a verbal group) and participant (the participant (s) by (a) nominal group(s).

In conclusion, Transitivity is the representation in language of processes, the participants there in and the circumstantial features associated with them. Transitivity refers generally to how meaning is represented in the clause. Transitivity shows how or reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them. The following table is the type of transitivity element and the realization.

### **Mental Process**

[3] state that mental process refers to verbs indicating perception, cognition and affection. Semantically, a mental process involves sense, which is inside the human or conscious being. Syntactically, the unmarked tense associated with this type of process is simple present tense. Mental process into three classes namely: cognition (thinking), affection (feeling), perception, and desiderative.

#### 1) Affection

Affection is verbs of liking and fearing. It is expressed by such verbs as like, love, enjoy, please, delight, dislike, hate, and want. For example:

I	Hate	You
Participant	Process:Mental	Participant
I	(affection)	II

I	Love	my mother
Participant	Process: Mental	Participant
I	(affection)	II

#### 2) Cognition

Cognition is verbs of thinking, knowing and understanding. It is realized by such verbs as: believe, doubt, guess, recognize, think, forget, mean, remember, and understand. For example:

I	will remember	You
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Participant	Process:Mental	Participant
I	1	II

### 3) Perception

Perception is verbs of seeing and hearing. It is realized by verbs as see, hear, look, watch and listen. For example:

I	See	the lion
Participant	Process:Mental	Participant
I	(perception)	II

### 4) Desiderative

Desiderative includes expressing desire such as want, desire, hope, decide, and determine. For example:

I	Want	This green wallet
Participant	Process:Mental	Participant
I	(desiderative)	II

## 3 Research Method

This study was conducted by applying qualitative research. According to [8] state that qualitative research is focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in natural settings.

The data of this study were mental process found in the clauses of Donald Trumph's speech. As an initial source of data, it was the script of Donald Trump's speech on March 11, 2020 about the coronavirus which were taken from <https://www.cnn.com> accessed at July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The data analysis of this study was based on [9]. There were three steps of data analysis: data condensation, data display, and drawing and verification conclusion.

## 4 Results and Discussion

There were four concepts of mental process in Donald Trumph's speech, namely affection, cognition, perception, and desiderative.

**a. Affection**

Theoretically, this concept is verbs of liking and fearing. It is expressed by such verbs as like, love, enjoy, please, delight, dislike, hate, and want. In this study, it was found 7 utterances of mental process were found in Donald Trump's speech. Some of the data could be described as follows:

**Datum No.1**

And    I                    want to thank all of

Conj    Senser                    Men: Affection

the doctors and scientists and

Phenomenon: things

researchers involved    because they've never moved like this

Circ: Cause

From Datum above shows that *want to thank all of* as verbs of affection and phenomenon which is perceived by the senser is a thing, *the doctors and scientists and researchers involved* where phenomenon of thing realized by noun group. In addition, the word *because they've never moved like this* is circumstances cause where it indicates the reason Donald Trump is fully grateful to the doctors who are professionals in dealing with outbreaks who never complain and get tired.

**Datum No. 2**

We're    proud                    to announce

Senser    Men: Affection                    Phen: act

the addition of two of the most highly respected skilled professionals    in our country

Circ: Location

From Datum above shows that *we* is senser where Donald Trump feel proud to doctors which have skill professional in facing corona virus while *proud* as verbs of affection and phenomenon which is perceived by the senser is act where phenomenon of act is participants / senser involved in that process. Moreover, the word *in our country* showed circumstances place which

indicates United State of America. In this case, Donald Trumph announced that United State has skill to deal with the outbreak, Covid 19.

### **Datum No. 3**

We    will be very happy    if they were

senser    Men: Affection    Implicit phenomenon

able to do it

From datum above, in mental process is followed by verbal group *will be very happy* with the word *happy* as the head word that is also affection. A participant I can be found here is represented by the word *we*. Here, we cannot found any phenomenon to be sensed by the senser *we*. We can see that there are clause complex before clause *will be very happy*. Therefore participant in clause, which is the noun group *we* that function as senser and nothing to be sensed or in this case phenomenon.

### **Datum No. 4**

I    want to especially thank    this

Sen    Men: Affection    Phen: thing

group    for joining us

Circ: Cause

From Datum above shows that *want to thank all of* as verbs of affection and phenomenon which is perceived by the senser is a thing. In addition, the word *for joining us* is circumstances cause. It indicates the purpose of Donald Trumph make a group in order to make it easier for him to communicate with staff and doctor in protecting his citizen.

### **Datum No. 5**

I    especially want to thank

senser    Men: Affection

Senator Steve Daines of Montana

Phen: thing

for his incredible work

Cir: Cause

In datum above, there is one single clause. We can find the participants in the clause. The role of senser is realized by noun group *I*. As we know, senser is always a person and a noun group. In this clause, the role of senser is presented by noun group. Senser must always be animate and is usually human. Thus, the word *I* here is a representation of senser. The word *want* here included of affection because Donald Trump's proud feeling for Steve's work in creating vaccine to prevent coronavirus. Prepositional phrase of on this score realizes the role of cause as circumstance because *thank* is addressed to Steve.

#### **b. Cognition**

Theoretically, this concept is verbs of thinking, knowing and understanding. It is realized by such verbs as: believe, doubt, guess, recognize, think, forget, mean, remember, and understand. In this study, it was found 17 utterances of mental process were found in Donald Trump's speech. Some of the data could be described as follows:

#### **Datum No.1**

I        think        we're going to have

senser   Men: Cog        Phen: Idea

some very interesting things        to report in the not too distant future.

From datum above, the role of phenomenon representation of the content of thinking by *I* as senser, that functions as phenomenon of idea. In other words, in this mental process, noun group *I* as Senser, who senses *all of people in United State* as a thing phenomenon, that follows the process that is realized by the word *think*. In this data, mental process is signified by the verbal group *think* as head of the group. Here, the word *think* is a cognition verb which is verbal group refers to idea.



### Datum No.2

I        am confident    that by counting and  
Sen    Men: Cog        Implicit phenomenon  
continuing        to take these tough measures

Circ: Cause

From datum above, mental process is signified by the verbal group *confident* with as head of the group. Here, the word *confident* is similar an cognition verb which is verbal group *believe* refers to be sure of the truth. Here, we cannot found any phenomenon to be sensed by the senser *I*. We can see that there are clause complex before clause *confident*. Therefore participant in clause, which is the noun group *I* that function as senser and nothing to be sensed or in this case phenomenon. In addition, circumstance indicates the reason of Donald Trump count many victims of corona virus. That is why, circumstance has function cause in speech.

### Datum No. 3

We    think                we're going to have some very good results coming  
Senser Men: cog        phen: idea

out                    very quickly

Cir: Manner

The word *think* in the data above indicates mental process of cognition. It indicates mental process of cognition since the word *think* shows the process of thinking. Here, the senser is *we* the one who does the process of thinking. However, the second participant, phenomenon as idea which is thought is not mentioned in this case. This sentence describes that Donald Trump must quick in solving this problem about Covid 19.

### c. Perception

Theoretically, this concept is verbs of seeing and hearing. It is realized by verbs as see, hear, look, watch and listen. In this study, it was found 4 utterances of mental process were found in Donald Trump's speech. Some of the data could be described as follows:

### Datum No. 1

we    have seen    dramatically fewer cases of the virus

Sen    Men: Perc    Cir: Manner

in the United States than are now present in Europe

Cir: Location

The datum above shows the process of perception or the so-called process of seeing which is represented by the word *have seen* signified by the verbal group and *seen* with as head of the group. In this case, circumstance manner and location as complex clause to know place fewer cases of Corona virus. In addition, there is nothing to be sensed or phenomenon. Though implicit phenomenon, but we can foun previous sentences in Donald Trumph's speech *that taking early intense action*. So, the information can support previous sentences.

### Datum No. 2

So January 11th, most people    never even

Senser    Men:Percep

heard what was going on January 11th

Phen: idea

The datum above shows the process of perception or the so-called process of listen which is represented by the word *never even heard* signified by the verbal group and *heard* with as head of the group. In this case, on January 11<sup>th</sup>, Scientists at the NIH began developing the first vaccine candidate but many American did not listen and know it. That is why, phenomenon function as idea because this solution from thinking of Donald Trumph.

#### d. Desiderative

Theoretically, this concept is expressing desire such as want, desire, hope, decide, and determine. In this study, it was found 11 utterances of mental process were found in Donald Trumph's speech. Some of the data could be described as follows:

### Datum No. 1

I have decided to take several

Sen Men: Des Phen: Perfecti

strong but necessary actions to protect the

Cir: Cause

health and well being of all Americans

The datum above shows in mental processes of desiderative is *decide*. Similar to the verb *want*, clauses in the *decide* also followed by perfective clause. The word *to take several strong but necessary actions* followed conjunction *but* till indicated perfective clause. In this case, the role of circumstances as cause (reason) because Donald Trump's action want protect all American from outbreaks, Covid-19.

### Datum No. 2

tonight, I want to speak Senser Men: Des

with you

Phenomenon: thing

about our nation's unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak

Circumstances: Matter

In this data, mental process is signified by the verbal group *want to speak*. The word *want* functions as the head of the group. Here, the word *want* is a desiderative verb which is verbal group *want* refers to desire of Donald Trump in delivering message. On the other hand, something that is being sensed by senser *you* or phenomenon is *with you* that functions as phenomenon of thing. The role of circumstance is realized by *about our nation's unprecedented response* functions as circumstance of matter. It is because the phrase answers the question about problem that becomes one characteristics of matter as circumstance.

In this section the data was abstracted into table 1 as follows:

**Table 1. Data Tabulation**

No	Types of Mental Process	Frequency	Percentage
1	Affection	7	17.9
2	Cognition	17	43.6
3	Perception	4	10.3
4	Desiderative	11	28.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on table above, there were 39 utterances that contained of mental process in Donald Trump's speech. It divided into four concepts found in Donald Trump's speech, namely 7 (17.9%) for affection, 17 (43.6%) for cognition, 4 (10.3%) for perception, and 11 (28.2%) for desiderative. The dominant type of mental process in Donald Trump's speech was cognition. It means that President of Donald Trump provides insight to American about the corona virus in conveying to be calm in the face of the outbreak and tend to express it as the content of thinking created by cognition, not emotion.

## 5 Conclusion

Based on the research findings, some conclusions are drawn as the following: 1) The researcher found there were 39 utterances that contained of mental process in Donald Trump's speech. It divided into four concepts found in Donald Trump's speech, namely 7 (17.9%) for affection, 17 (43.6%) for cognition, 4 (10.3%) for perception, and 11 (28.2%) for desiderative. The dominant type of mental process in Donald Trump's speech was cognition. It means that President of Donald Trump provides insight to American about the corona virus in conveying to be calm in the face of the outbreak and tend to express it as the content of thinking created by cognition, not emotion. 2) The process of mental process which found in Donald Trump's speech where to explain the president of Donald Trump's ideas about corona, to explain the solution in facing outbreak corona virus and to give readers a picture in their mind of what is being discussed.

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