

**THE ANALYSIS OF MOOD AS INTERPERSONAL MEANING IN THE  
DONALD J. TRUMP PRESIDENTIAL LETTER ADDRESSED TO RECEP T.  
ERDOGAN ON  
OCTOBER 9<sup>TH</sup> 2019**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This article reports the analysis of the Mood toward Trumps' presidential letter to Erdogan dated October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The researcher used a qualitative method based on the theory of systemic functional linguistics which Halliday introduced which lies on three-meta-functions of language to analyze the data. The researcher focused on interpersonal meaning theory to analyze the mood system, residue, and types of mood in each clause as Trump's official written utterance. The reason for the analysis was that there are many controversial utterances that have been used by Trump to address Erdogan. The letter was an official letter from US President to Turkey's President as a response to Turkey's president's decision to launch a military operation in Syria. The analysis has found that there are four imperative moods and fifteen declarative moods shown in the letter. The imperative moods then might be discussed as a controversial context because when Trump used imperative sentences it could be interpreted that Trump used a direct diplomatic communication style with Erdogan. Otherwise, the declarative mood marks the letter as a clear language style in explaining Trump's purpose and aim systematically. The researcher then suggests to the reader to analyze powerful people's messages conveyed through their letters, speech, diplomatic dialogue, or official forum group discussion to gain more understanding of how meaning contextually works in spoken or written text.*

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Meaning, Mood, Letter, Trump, Erdogan*

## INTRODUCTION

The relevance of letter-based communication in linguistics domains cannot be avoided for a number of reasons. The documentation and preservation of data related to linguistics study, analysis, and findings can be assisted by letters. The study of language structure, sound patterns, meaning, and language acquisition is included in the broad area of linguistics. A properly formatted letter guarantees that the data is adequately documented and can be consulted in the future for additional analysis or research. Collaboration and networking among linguists are made possible via letters. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of linguistics, researchers frequently consult with linguists who specialize in different fields. Linguists can start collaborations, ask for guidance, or share ideas through letters with professionals in various linguistic subfields. Such partnerships can result in fresh insights, research improvements, and a deeper comprehension of language. For formal contact within the linguistics field, letters are used. Linguists frequently work together on research projects, consult with one another for suggestions or criticism, or interact with academic organizations. Writing a letter adds professionalism and enables the expression of ideas and views in a straightforward manner, preventing any misunderstanding or ambiguity that can occur in casual interactions.

Letter-based communication is also used in political and diplomatic interaction. The use of letters in diplomatic communication today recognized as relevant due to its formality, documentation, deliberation, and historical significance. It is a valuable tool for effective diplomacy, facilitating diplomatic engagements, negotiations, and conflict resolution processes. Conflict resolution and dispute mediation can benefit from the use of letters. Diplomats can communicate their problems, offer answers, and have productive conversations without actually meeting in person by exchanging letters. This approach enables respectful and calm discussions and encourages parties to look for points of agreement and cooperate on peaceful settlements. In this study, the letter-based communication that will be examined and discussed in depth is the letter sent by Donald

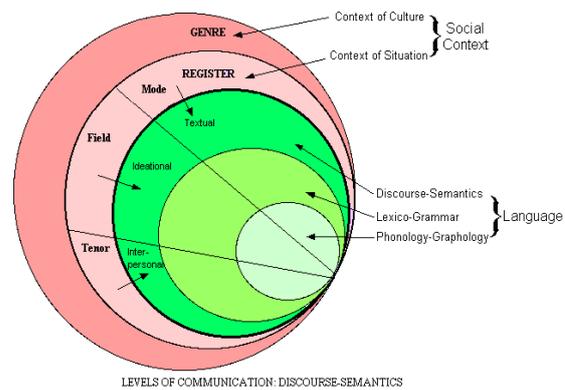
Trump, as the US president, to Erdogan, as the president of Türkiye. This letter was sent in October 2019 and can be categorized as a means of political diplomacy because Trump sent the letter with a very clear purpose. The letter was intended to convey his appeal and goals to Erdogan. This study is interesting because of Donald Trump's unique diplomatic style. Trump's language style has become the subject of many people's articles and research. Sclafani (2018) investigates the language of Donald Trump's presidential campaign from the perspective of sociocultural linguistics. Umiyati (2018) learned how textual meta-function is realized and what mood and theme types predominated in Trump's address. Inglehart, et al. (2016) examined Donald Trump's speeches and tweets from the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign to understand his populist communication style. It looks at linguistic patterns like exaggeration, simplicity, and the use of populist rhetoric.

The study is valuable because it offers a thorough examination of how authors and speakers employ implicit meaning through the use of letter to engage readers or listeners in the information conveyed for a deeper comprehension of the text and to influence those who are impacted by the aim to take the required actions. This study is based on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics theory. According to Halliday, language is an outcome of social interaction (Yu: 2017). Language systems present the most fundamental language functions and have varied meanings in terms of functional grammar. Based on the premise that a language's structure and the forms that make it up are inexorably defined by the utilizations or functions which they serve, it seeks to demonstrate that language is a means of social interaction. Any language use that establishes social and personal relationships is actualized by the primary interpersonal function. This covers different ways a speaker enters a speech situation and executes a speech act, as well as different ways a writer expresses his or her own goals or intentions in a text or book. Based on Halliday's theory, Yu (2017) comes to the conclusion that language is used by the speaker or writer to literally exchange information or

services among people, or to establish and maintain social relationships. On a deeper level, interactions will affect other people's behavior and judgments and reveal the speaker's attitudes in a particular case or the purpose of a certain action. The interpersonal function of language shows that the language producer (speaker and writer) is a participant in the communication process with potential significance and a clear message. The semantic component of language is used by the language producer to convey his attitude or judgment and influence readers' opinions and behavior.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

An Introduction to Functional Grammar by Halliday (2004) describes a text as the end result of ongoing choice in a vast network of systems, or a system network. The data supporting systemic theory's validity shows that a language's grammar is represented as a system network rather than a list of structures. His thesis explains his notion that a text's structure is a crucial component of its description, but it is viewed as the fourth shape adopted by systemic preferences rather than as the distinguishing feature of language (p. 23). One of the important component in Halliday's functional grammar is the meta-functions. He classified it into three kinds: textual function, interpersonal function and ideational function. Each of the three meta-functions focuses on a distinct area of reality and has a unique mode of meaning for clauses. The ideational meta-function is concerned with clauses as representations of the natural world in its fullest sense, which includes our own consciousness. The interpersonal meta-function is concerned with clauses as exchanges and is concerned with the social environment, particularly the interaction between speaker and hearer. The textual meta-function is concerned with clauses as messages and is concerned with the verbal environment, particularly the information flow in a text.



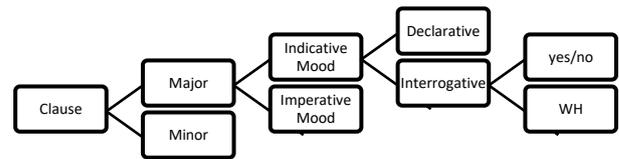
The Transitivity system enables ideational (experiential and logical) meanings construing Field to be realized lexico-grammatically. This system describes experiential meanings in terms of people, processes, and situations to interpret and depict things we experience in the world. Systems of Mood & Modality enable interpersonal meanings to be realized lexico-grammatically. The mood system serves as the primary tool for connecting language users through speech roles like offering or requesting commodities, services, or information. Grammatically, questions are classified as interrogatives, commands as imperatives, and the giving of information or goods and services as declarative. The interaction of interpersonal and conceptual information as text in context is what textual meanings are concerned with. Systems of theme/rheme enable textual meanings to be realized lexico-grammatically. The choice of theme and rheme establishes the clause's orientation toward its interpersonal and conceptual concerns.

Interactions between a speaker and a listener or a writer and a reader are relevant to interpersonal meaning. It is expressed in a phrase by wordings known as Mood and Modality. Text can be used for a variety of purposes, including informational purposes, entertainment, and persuasion. Because the explanation is directed at the other person, interpersonal meaning analysis primarily aims to persuade them or put them in a particular perspective. The interpersonal functions help create and preserve social bonds and define the participants' roles in communication (Halliday, 2002). The speaker/writer persona (whether the writer or speaker has a neutral attitude,

which can be seen through the use of positive or negative language), social distance (how close the speakers are to one another), and relative social status all contribute to the interpersonal meta-function, which understands the tenor or interactivity of a text (whether they are equal in terms of power and knowledge on a subject).

According to Halliday and Hasan (1989), the most essential factor of the nature of a text is that, despite appearing to be composed of words and sentences when it is written down, it is actually composed of meaning. Here, we can see if a text can serve as a tool for creating meaning, and that meaning is derived from systemic patterns in the word selections. An abbreviated representation of the system network for mood can be used to explain how system and structure interact in a text.

Systemic functional linguistics holds that mood is a part of interpersonal function. Alongside the systems of transitivity, modality, and others, mood is regarded in SFL as one of the core grammatical systems. The way that speakers and writers transmit their goals and engage with their discourse context is greatly influenced by these systems, which work together to give language meaning. Positioning the subject sentence and finite verbs creates mood in English. Depending on the tone of the sentence, the two components are interchangeable. Gerott and Wignell list a few different types of moods that would serve as the foundation for their research, including: (1) The indicative mood, which consists of the elements subject + finite. Declarative and interrogative sentences are realized in the order of subject and finite. When the clause is either yes/no type or WH type, the finite comes before the subject, and if WH type, it has a WH element, it can be declarative if the subject comes before the finite, but it can also be an interrogative. The articulation of claims, descriptions, reports, and affirmations are frequently related with the declarative mood. It is employed to convey factual information or make assertions. (2) Imperatives mood. In imperatives the mood element may consist of subject + finite, subject only, finite only, or they may don't have any mood element. There will always be a predicator. In figure 2, the mood system network is described.



In light of the information provided above on mood as a component of systemic functional linguistic research, the researcher here created a study to learn more about the mood system in clauses. An illustration was taken from the most recent letter from the US President to the president of Turkey. Recep Tayyip Erdogan received a threatening letter from Donald J. Trump, the president of the United States, on October 9, 2019 in response to Erdogan's significant decision to send Turkish troops to northern Syria. Due to the widespread effects of Erdogan's significant policy, the US president only wrote a stern letter to him a few days after one of his military operations had been completed. It caused Trump to use a number of questionable verbal choices to caution him. The letter was published only three days after a phone call between Trump and Erdogan, the day Turkey's invasion of Syria began. This essay goes into better detail on what Trump said to Erdogan in his written diplomacy. The researcher examined the tone of Trump's letter, and the findings were used as the basic information for the discussion.

The researcher has formulated a question that the analysis's outcome would answer: *“What kind of mood realized in each clause in the letter made by President Donald J. Trump for President Recep T. Erdogan dated on October 9<sup>th</sup> 2019?”*

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research object in this study is the official text of the presidential letter sent by Donald Trump to President Erdogan. This letter is a quick response to Erdogan's political decision regarding the Syrian war. Original text of the

letter was downloaded from the Washington Post newspaper's official website. This letter was officially sent to President Erdogan on October 9, 2019. The release date of document on the official website of Washington Post newspaper is October 17, 2019. Each sentence written in the letter is analyzed using the systemic functional linguistic theory framework initiated by Halliday. The analysis in this study operates a qualitative method.

The qualitative method used by the researcher was suitable for analyzing the mood as a component of interpersonal meaning elements. The purpose of a qualitative research study was to gather information about the current state of phenomena. It's coordinated toward deciding the idea of circumstance, as it exists at the hour of study. A treatment is not administered or controlled in the same way that it is in experimental testing. The objective is to describe the existing circumstances, conditions, and variables.

In general, the qualitative method is a type of research that focuses on the quality of the research itself. The approach is based on observing previously collected data. This examination has no reason to answer speculation yet rather to look at and describe the representation of social events that has been established in the Trump's official letter to Erdogan. Understanding social processes from the perspective of the researcher is the main objective of qualitative research, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001). Understanding is attained by looking at a variety of contexts and telling how the researcher interprets these circumstances and events. They clarified that two main aims of study were to describe and explore and to describe and explain (2001).

## DISCUSSION

The researcher has analysed all of sentences written in the Trumps' letter to Erdogan used Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. Each phrase in the Trump Letter has been analysed in detail and marked as Mood 1, Mood 2, Mood 3, and so on respectively. How the Subject and Finite were actualized in the phrase is what the mood is concerned with. The mood element in the letter refers to the

declarative and imperative moods as the researcher only found these two. Given a table to classify the mood:

Mood number	Kind of Mood
Mood (1)	Imperative
Mood (2)	Declarative (negative polarity)
Mood (3)	Declarative (negative polarity)
Mood (4)	Declarative
Mood (5)	Declarative
Mood (6)	Declarative
Mood (7)	Imperative
Mood (8)	Declarative
Mood (9)	Declarative
Mood (10)	Declarative
Mood (11)	Declarative
Mood (12)	Declarative
Mood (13)	Declarative
Mood (14)	Declarative
Mood (15)	Declarative
Mood (16)	Declarative
Mood (17)	Imperative
Mood (18)	Imperative
Mood (19)	Declarative

There are four (4) imperative moods and fifteen (15) declarative moods shown in the table. Trump has delivered his message to Erdogan by using imperative mood and declarative mood to highlight some of his intentions clearly. Imperative typically serves to order the audience to take the desired action.

*"Let's work out a good deal"* which consists of only one subject is classified as imperative mood. Trump's first sentence using imperative mood is interpreted that his letter is aimed to order Erdogan to do something he wanted. There are some sentences also identified applying imperative mood:

*"Don't let the world down"* (mood 7)

*"Don't be a tough guy"* (mood 17)

*"Don't be a fool"* (mood 18)

Other mood that recognized in this research is declarative mood. Declarative moods are employed to express factual information or to make direct remarks about reality. It is defined by the usage of declarative clause structures, which typically pair a subject with a finite verb.

*"You don't want to be responsible for slaughtering thousands of people and..."* is marked as Mood 2 and consists of Subject + Finite + Polarity + Predicator + Conjunctive Adjunct + Complement + Adjunct + Adjunct of Complement + Conjunctive Adjunct. It is classified as declarative mood with negative polarity. The next sentence as mood 3, is also applying declarative mood within its' negative polarity.

*"I've already given you a little sample with respect to Pastour Brunson"* which is marked as mood 5, consisting of Subject + Finite + Conjunctive Adjunct + Predicator + Complement + Adjunct of complement. This sentence is applying declarative mood as it clearly signs its' purpose. Similar declarative mood is also contained in the next sentence (mood 6) that consists of Subject + Finite + Predicator + Adjunct + Adjunct of Complement.

*"General Mazloum is willing to negotiate with you and..."* consists of Subject + Finite + Adjunct of Readiness + Predicator + Conjunctive Adjunct + Complement + Conjunctive Adjunct. This mood 9 is found applied declarative mood, followed by seven sentences afterwards.

*"I will call you later."* Which consists of Subject + Finite + Predicator + Complement + Adjunct of time, is the closing sentence of Trump letter to Erdogan. It is defined as declarative mood means he has made plan to follow up the letter by calling Erdogan.

Trump imperative sentences could be interpreted that Trump has a feeling as more powerful person above Erdogan. Most of utterances are instructive and threatening sentences that reflect Trump response as a disagreement stance to Erdogan's policy. Some clauses reflect that Trump has done his negotiation to Erdogan extrovertly or straight to the point. The imperative moods then might be discussed as controversial context that then being viral and widely reported by many worldwide news agencies. Vivian Ho and agencies of the Guardian.com reported this controversial correspondence, as many other worldwide news agencies, on Thursday, 17

October 2019 only a week after the letter has been sent. Vivian Ho (2019) wrote that Donald Trump warned his counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan *"don't be a fool"* and said history risked branding him a *"devil"* in an extraordinary letter sent the day Turkey bring up its' invasion into north-eastern Syria. Ho (2019) said that the letter, first obtained by a Fox Business reporter, was shorn of diplomatic niceties and began with an outright threat. She then reported days after appearing to green light an invasion by pulling US troops from the Kurdish-Dominated region, Trump told the Turkish president he would wreck Ankara's economy if the invasion went too far. On the same day Ho reported this event, Zachary Cohen has also launched the similar news. Cohen (2019) wrote the tone of the letter is consistent with Trump's unconventional approach to diplomacy, particularly when dealing with strongman leaders, as he tells Erdogan: *"Let's work out a good deal"* and *"Don't be a fool"*. However, Trump also warned Erdogan not to *"be a tough guy"*. Then Trump wrote *"Don't let the world down"* adding the Kurds are willing to negotiate and willing to *"make concessions that they never made in the past"*. Trump ends by saying *"History will look upon you favorably if you get this done right and humane way."* He reminds and forewarns that history would note Erdogan *"forever as the devil if good things don't happen"* (Cohen, 2019).

Another mood that has been founded was declarative mood. It was the most common way of how Trump expressed his idea in his letter. The main purpose was of course to carry Trumps' messages in order they can be communicated clearly and correctly, and can emphasize key information of his intention that must be well understood by Erdogan. Strong declarative mood was empirically seen in his second and third sentences: *"You don't want to be responsible for slaughtering thousands of people and I don't want to be responsible for destroying the Turkish economy and I will."* These clauses were used by Trump as opening remarks and also can be interpreted as Trump firm respond to Erdogans' military operation in Syria that might possibly affect thousands of people and intimidate Erdogan if he shall

destroy Turkish economy. On the second paragraph, Trump emphasized his suggestion to Erdogan to do negotiation with General Mazloum. This can be read in these clauses: “General Mazloum is willing to take negotiation with you, and he is willing to make concession that they would never made in the past”. Then in the last paragraph, Trump reminded Erdogan to stop operation and end his military policy by saying: “History will look upon you favorably if you get this done the right and humane way”. Emphasized by his threat “It will look upon you forever as the devil if good things don’t happen”.

By taking into account the outcomes and conclusions presented above, it becomes clear why Ummiyati's (2019) earlier research findings and those of the present study were comparable. Her research supports the explanation that the mood in Donald Trump's speech is dominated by the Declarative Mood. Umiyati (2019) discovered that Donald Trump's speech employed the realization of textual meta-function. There were 84 clauses in Donald Trump's speech, each of which had a theme and rheme that conveyed the message to the audience. Mood (theme in declarative sentences) dominated the speech, especially the unmarked theme, which had 44 clauses and the marked theme, which had 38 clauses. Otherwise, the lowest calculation, which resulted in 2 clauses from the total amount of clauses, was (theme in imperative clauses).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The researcher discovered that the letter provided imperative and declarative mood types as the result of analysis. One key to understanding Trump and Erdogan's interpersonal relationship is this mood system. There were four times that Trump used imperative mood when addressing Erdogan and also 25 declarative moods, within two (2) negative polarity. Some controversial remarks that Trump, as President of the United States, made in an inappropriate manner to Erdogan, as President of Turkey. It can be used as evidence that their relationship was not good at the time the letter was written. Taking into

consideration the choice of mood, Trump strongly disagreed with Erdogan's decision and instructed him to negotiate to halt his military operation.

The application of systemic functional linguistics may benefit from the analysis. Analyzing Trump's attitude as it is reflected in his letter to Erdogan will also assist English language learners in learning about interpersonal meaning as the starting point for the application of systemic functional linguistics to discourse analysis. This study would be a useful resource for learning about how formal written communication might fulfill systemic functional linguistics in English language teaching. The researcher suggests conducting a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis on another type of similar research. The language learner could learn a written letter not only as a textual grammatical object but also as a meaningful material that could be explored contextually and semantically, related to the situation in which the letter is produced, the political position of the producer, historical factor, religion factor, and other factors. This could be accomplished by employing systemic functional linguistic theory. The global response to Erdogan's military operation in Syria could be affected by another significant study on Trump's diplomatic letter. In addition, it does not rule out the possibility that the study's findings could be viewed as a historical component connected to the prolonged war in Syria.

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