DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTION IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT ROBERTA METSOLA'S ADDRESS CONCERNING GREENLAND AND DENMARK

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the manifestation of the interpersonal metafunction in European Parliament President Roberta Metsola's speech about Greenland and Denmark, utilizing a discourse analytical framework based on Systemic Functional Linguistics. The analysis focuses on mood structures, modality, and pronoun usage to uncover how meaning is constructed to achieve specific communicative purposes. The findings indicate that the speech is predominantly composed of declarative clauses functioning as statements, suggesting that the speaker's primary intention is to provide information, express commitment, and assert authority. The repeated utilization of inclusive pronouns signifies a deliberate attempt to cultivate a communal identity and mutual responsibility between the speaker and the listener, a tactic frequently adopted in political discourse to promote solidarity and unity. In addition, the prominence of high-certainty modal expressions signals a strong degree of determination, highlighting the speaker's effort to project confidence and commitment toward future actions. Consequently, the linguistic patterns identified in this study reveal that the speaker strategically employs interpersonal linguistic features to reinforce authority, promote unity, and reassure the audience regarding stability and cooperation in addressing international security concerns.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Interpersonal Meaning, Political Speech, Modality, Pronoun Usage, Declarative Clauses.

1) INTRODUCTION

Language is not only used to convey information but also to express ideas, emotions, and perspectives, as well as to establish and maintain social relationships between speakers and their audiences. According to Edward Sapir (1921), language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires through a

system of voluntarily produced symbols. This indicates that language plays a central role in shaping human interaction, particularly in formal contexts such as political discourse.

In political settings, language is used strategically to represent ideological positions, influence audiences, and construct social relations. Political speeches are not merely informative but also persuasive and carefully structured to achieve certain communicative purposes. Therefore, analyzing political discourse is essential to understand how speakers use language to interact with audiences and convey their intentions. One approach that can be applied is Discourse Analysis, particularly within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) proposed by M. A. K. Halliday. In this framework, language consists of three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Among these, interpersonal metafunction focuses on how speakers establish and maintain relationships with their audience through linguistic features such as mood, modality, and evaluative expressions.

This study focuses on the analysis of interpersonal metafunction in a political speech delivered by Roberta Metsola, particularly her address concerning Greenland and Denmark. The speech is categorized as a political speech because it reflects political perspectives and attempts to influence audiences at both regional and global levels. In her speech, Metsola emphasizes issues such as solidarity, sovereignty, and cooperation, especially in relation to geopolitical dynamics involving Greenland and Denmark. This makes the speech significant to be analyzed, as it represents the official stance of the European Union and demonstrates how language is used to maintain diplomatic relationships and influence public perception in an international context.

Several previous studies have been conducted related to discourse analysis in political speeches. For example, a study analyzing speeches by Barack Obama applied critical discourse analysis to explore political language, although it did not comprehensively examine interpersonal metafunction (Wang, 2010). Another study by Putra (2021) analyzed Donald Trump's speech on the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, focusing on how interpersonal metafunction is used to establish relationships and persuade audiences. Similarly,

research conducted by Sari (2022) on Vladimir Putin's political speech showed that language is used strategically to construct ideological positions and influence global audiences.

In addition, other studies have examined metafunction analysis in different contexts. Zudianto (2015) analyzed interpersonal metafunction in English textbooks to explore how social relations are represented in educational materials. Cahyati (2019) focused on ideational metafunction through transitivity systems in recount texts, showing how meaning is constructed through participants, processes, and circumstances. Furthermore, Kabigting (2020) investigated interpersonal metafunction in online news headlines related to the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting how language is used to shape public perception. Lauwren (2021) also analyzed interpersonal functions in Greta Thunberg's speech using interpersonal metafunction and critical discourse analysis approaches.

However, most of these studies focus either on political leaders from specific countries or on written texts such as textbooks and news articles. There is still limited research that examines interpersonal metafunction in speeches delivered by leaders of supranational institutions, particularly within the European Union context and in relation to specific geopolitical issues such as Greenland and Denmark. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing interpersonal metafunction in Roberta Metsola's speech, which represents a different institutional and political context.

The objectives of this study are twofold. First, it aims to identify the language strategies used by Roberta Metsola in her speech to interact with her audience through interpersonal metafunction. Second, it seeks to analyze how these strategies are realized through linguistic elements such as mood, modality, and other interpersonal features. By achieving these objectives, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how language is used to construct relationships and influence audiences in political discourse.

2) METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach to analyze the use of interpersonal metafunction in a political speech delivered by Roberta Metsola. Qualitative research is considered appropriate for this study because it allows for an in-depth

exploration of linguistic features and meanings within a specific context, particularly in discourse analysis.

The primary data of this study consist of the transcript of Roberta Metsola's speech concerning Greenland and Denmark. The speech was selected because it represents a formal political discourse within the context of the European Union and contains rich linguistic features relevant to interpersonal metafunction analysis. The data source is obtained from official or publicly available records to ensure authenticity and reliability.

The data collection technique used in this study is documentation. The researcher collected the speech transcript, carefully read and reviewed it multiple times, and then identified relevant clauses and sentences that contain interpersonal elements. These elements include mood types (declarative, interrogative, and imperative), modality (modal verbs and modal adjuncts), and evaluative expressions that reflect the speaker's attitude and stance toward the audience and the topic.

For data analysis, this study adopts the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly the interpersonal metafunction as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The analysis follows several steps. First, the speech is segmented into clauses to facilitate detailed examination. Second, each clause is analyzed to identify its mood structure and modality features. Third, the researcher interprets how these linguistic elements function to establish and maintain relationships between the speaker and the audience. Finally, the findings are categorized and described to reveal patterns of interpersonal meaning within the speech.

To ensure the validity of the analysis, the researcher applies theoretical triangulation by referring to established SFL theories and previous related studies. The results are presented descriptively to provide a clear understanding of how interpersonal metafunction is realized in Roberta Metsola's political speech.

3) RESULTS

The results of this study present the analysis of interpersonal metafunction found in Roberta Metsola's political speech concerning Greenland and Denmark. The analysis focuses

on the use of mood structures, modality, and evaluative expressions as linguistic resources to construct interpersonal meaning between the speaker and the audience.

To present the findings systematically, the results are divided into several categories of interpersonal metafunction, namely mood types, speech function, subject types, and modal verbs.

Frequency of Mood Types

Table 1. Frequency of Mood Types

Mood Type	Frequency	Percentage
Declarative	40	100%
Interrogative	0	0%
Imperative	0	0%
Exclamative	0	0%

All clauses in the speech are realized in declarative mood, indicating that the speaker primarily provides information and statements rather than asking questions or giving commands.

Frequency of Speech Functions

Table 2. Frequency of Speech Functions

Speech Function	Frequency	Percentage
Statement	40	100%
Question	0	0%
Command	0	0%
Offer	0	0%

The dominance of the statement function reflects the informative and persuasive nature of political speech discourse, where the speaker aims to assert positions, provide reassurance, and express commitment.

Frequency of Subject Types

Table 3. Frequency of Subject Types

Subject Type	Frequency
We / we	11
I	4
They / they	3
Europe	2
Values / principles	2
Others (single occurrences)	16

The dominance of the subject "we" indicates strong use of inclusive pronouns, which is typical in political discourse to construct solidarity, shared responsibility, and collective identity. The use of "I" signals authority and commitment, while references to Europe reinforce institutional identity.

Table 4. Frequency of Modal Verbs

Modal Verb	Frequency	Function in Context
will	9	prediction, commitment, determination
can	1	possibility / capability
must	1	obligation / necessity

Total Modal Verbs: 11

The modal verb "will" is dominant, reflecting strong commitment and certainty about future actions. This suggests a persuasive and authoritative stance in the speech, emphasizing assurance and determination rather than uncertainty.

4) DISCUSSION

Interpersonal Language Strategies

The findings reveal that the speaker predominantly employs declarative mood and statement speech functions, indicating that the speech is primarily intended to deliver information, express viewpoints, and persuade the audience. This can be seen in declarative

clauses such as "the European Union supports Denmark and the people of Greenland," "Greenland is not for sale," and "They are wrong." These statements show that the speaker focuses on presenting assertions and reinforcing certainty rather than inviting interaction through questions or commands. According to Halliday (1994), the interpersonal metafunction "expresses the speaker's role in the speech situation, his personal commitment and his interaction with others."

In this speech, the speaker's commitment and authority are clearly realized through assertive declarative clauses. Furthermore, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain that the clause functions as "an interactive event involving speaker, or writer, and audience." However, rather than negotiating interaction, the speaker positions herself mainly as an information provider and political authority. The absence of interrogative, imperative, and exclamative moods further demonstrates that the speech is constructed as a formal and authoritative political discourse aimed at maintaining credibility and public trust.

This finding is also supported by recent studies on political discourse. Brillianta and Setiarini (2022) found that declarative mood was the most dominant mood type in Joe Biden's campaign speech because it enabled the speaker to deliver persuasive messages while maintaining authority and credibility. Similarly, Darong (2022) argues that declarative clauses in political speeches are frequently used to create persuasive communication and strengthen the relationship between leaders and audiences. These findings confirm that declarative structures are central linguistic resources in political speeches because they allow speakers to present certainty, assert viewpoints, and influence public opinion effectively.

Another significant interpersonal strategy is the frequent use of the inclusive pronoun "we." Examples such as "we do so united in our resolve," "We understand the need for Europe to take on more responsibility," and "We are Europe" illustrate how the speaker positions herself together with the audience as part of a collective group. The pronoun "we" functions to reduce social distance between the speaker and listeners while simultaneously creating solidarity and unity. Gerot and Wignell (1994) state that interpersonal meanings express "a speaker's attitudes and judgments" and help create and maintain social relations. In

this speech, the repeated use of "we" reflects an effort to build shared responsibility and collective identity. Similarly, Eggins (2004) argues that language enables participants to "establish and develop social roles and social identity." Through this inclusive language, the speaker encourages the audience to perceive political challenges and responsibilities as common concerns. This strategy is highly effective in political discourse because it reinforces cooperation, solidarity, and collective engagement.

The present finding is consistent with Darong (2022), who explains that the pronoun "we" in political speeches functions to establish intimacy and closeness between speakers and audiences. Likewise, Chu and Deng (2023) argue that personal pronouns are important interpersonal resources because they strengthen political legitimacy and persuasive influence. In the current speech, the repeated use of "we" allows the speaker to position European identity as collective and unified, thereby reinforcing solidarity and shared responsibility among audiences.

Furthermore, the dominance of the modal verb "will" reflects a strong sense of commitment, certainty, and determination toward future actions. This can be identified in clauses such as "that fact will not change," "they will find understanding and partnership," and "Europe will always be open to continue to discuss in a spirit of mutual respect." The repeated use of "will" conveys assurance and confidence, presenting the speaker as reliable and decisive. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain that modality construes "the region of uncertainty that lies between yes and no." In this case, the modal verb "will" expresses a high degree of certainty and commitment to future action. Additionally, the statement "we will always stand up for our way" emphasizes resilience and firmness in defending European values. Therefore, the use of modality in the speech strengthens the persuasive tone and reinforces the speaker's image as a confident and committed leader.

This result is in line with Sirait (2023), who found that high-value modality in political speeches is frequently used to express power, confidence, and persuasion. The dominance of "will" in the current speech demonstrates the speaker's strong commitment and certainty regarding future political action. Similarly, Chu and Deng (2023) state that modality is

strategically employed in political discourse to strengthen persuasion and ideological positioning. Therefore, the modal choices in this speech contribute significantly to the construction of authority and public confidence.

Linguistic Realization

From a linguistic perspective, the interpersonal meanings in the speech are realized through specific grammatical choices, especially in the use of mood types, speech functions, subject types, and modal verbs. The predominance of declarative mood structures indicates that the clauses are organized to provide information and make assertions. Examples include "The measures threatened over the weekend by the United States administration will not help improve security in the Arctic" and "It is the opposite." Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) state that the interpersonal metafunction represents "language as action" because it is both "interactive and personal." In the speech, the declarative structures function as linguistic tools to assert authority and persuade the audience. The clauses are not structured to negotiate meaning through questions or commands, but rather to strengthen the speaker's position and certainty.

Recent research also supports this finding. Brillianta and Setiarini (2022) explain that declarative clauses in political speeches are commonly realized as persuasive assertions that position speakers as authoritative figures. In addition, Cheng (2023) emphasizes that interpersonal metafunction analysis remains highly relevant in discourse studies because it reveals how language constructs social relations and interpersonal meaning. In the current speech, declarative clauses linguistically realize authority and confidence while simultaneously reinforcing persuasive political communication.

The realization of interpersonal meaning is also evident in the selection of subjects, particularly the repeated use of the pronoun "we." Grammatically, "we" functions as a collective participant representing both the speaker and the audience. This can be observed in statements such as "We know that transatlantic and Arctic security can be achieved" and "We know that every serious global issue we must address is better faced when Europe and the United States act in sync with each other." According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the

Subject is closely related to interaction because it functions within the clause as exchange. The repeated use of "we" therefore linguistically realizes inclusivity and shared responsibility. In contrast, the use of the pronoun "I" in clauses such as "I reiterate that now" and "I know many here believe in the transatlantic relationship" highlights the speaker's personal stance, leadership, and responsibility. References to institutional entities such as "the European Union" and "Europe" further reinforce legitimacy and political authority.

This finding is supported by Darong (2022), who states that pronoun choices in political speeches function to strengthen emotional connection and solidarity between speakers and audiences. Similarly, Lauwren (2020) found that interpersonal functions in political and public speeches are frequently realized through pronoun selection because pronouns help speakers construct shared identity and collective engagement. Therefore, the use of "we" in the present speech becomes an important grammatical resource for constructing unity and cooperation.

In addition, modal verbs play an important role in expressing interpersonal attitudes and degrees of certainty. The modal verb "will" appears frequently in clauses such as "that fact will not change," "they will find understanding and partnership," and "we will make no apologies for that." Linguistically, these modal expressions realize strong commitment and confidence regarding future actions and positions. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) categorize modality into probability, usuality, obligation, and inclination. In this speech, "will" reflects probability and strong commitment, while the modal verb "must" in "every serious global issue we must address" expresses obligation and necessity. Meanwhile, the modal verb "can" in "transatlantic and Arctic security can be achieved" reflects possibility and capability. These modal choices contribute significantly to the persuasive tone of the speech by emphasizing determination, responsibility, and optimism. Therefore, the linguistic realization of interpersonal meaning in the speech demonstrates a strategic use of grammatical resources to reinforce authority, commitment, and collective engagement.

This interpretation is strengthened by Sirait (2023), who argues that modality is one of the most important interpersonal resources in political speeches because it reflects power, confidence, and ideological stance. Likewise, Chu and Deng (2023) explain that modal verbs

are strategically employed to persuade audiences and legitimize political intentions. Thus, the frequent use of "will," "must," and "can" in the speech not only conveys grammatical meaning but also strengthens the speaker's persuasive and authoritative position.

5) CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the interpersonal metafunction in the political speech is strategically realized through the dominance of declarative mood, inclusive pronouns, and modal verbs. The frequent use of declarative clauses indicates that the speech is primarily constructed to provide information, express viewpoints, and persuade audiences while maintaining authority and credibility. Through these declarative structures, the speaker positions herself as a reliable political leader who delivers certainty rather than negotiating interaction through questions or commands. In addition, the repeated use of the inclusive pronoun "we" functions to construct solidarity, collective identity, and shared responsibility between the speaker and the audience. This linguistic choice effectively reduces social distance and strengthens emotional engagement in political communication.

Furthermore, the use of modal verbs, particularly "will," demonstrates strong commitment, confidence, and determination toward future actions and political positions. Other modal verbs such as "must" and "can" also contribute to expressing obligation, necessity, and possibility. These modal choices reinforce the persuasive tone of the speech and strengthen the speaker's authoritative image. Linguistically, the interpersonal meanings are realized through specific grammatical resources, including mood structures, subject selection, speech functions, and modality. The findings therefore confirm that interpersonal metafunction plays a significant role in constructing persuasion, authority, solidarity, and political legitimacy in public discourse.

Overall, this study highlights that Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly interpersonal metafunction analysis, provides an effective framework for understanding how political speakers use language strategically to influence audiences and construct social relationships. The study also contributes to discourse analysis research by demonstrating how

grammatical choices function not only to convey information but also to express attitudes, commitments, and ideological positioning in political speeches.

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