

**LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS USED BY THE MAIN  
CHARACTERS IN THE “LITTLE WOMEN” MOVIE (2019)**

**THESIS**



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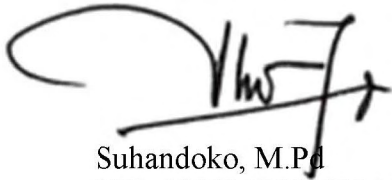
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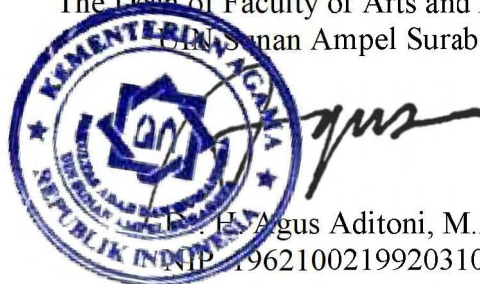
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recipes, PowerPoint presentation, email, message, etc. While spoken text, we can find it in interviews, dialogues, speech, movies, videos, radio, and so on.

Hornby (1995, p. 434) stated that the movie is moving pictures which consist of a story and recorded to be showing at the cinema or on television. The movie, also known as films or visual communication, that uses moving pictures and variety of sound such as dialogue between people, soundtrack that consist of music, and sound effect for every activity that happened in the movie. Movie has various of genres: adventure, comedy, action, documentary, animation, drama, horror, science fiction, romantic comedy, thriller, and fantasy. Moreover, there are several movies adapted from novels. These Novels are inspired based on the author's experience. Bordwell and Thompson (2008) stated that there are two ways in grouping films. That is by genre of the movie and by some conception of the film's relation to reality. One of the movies adapted from novels that adopt from the author's experience is a movie directed by Greta Gerwig entitle "Little Women" movie (2019).

There has been growing interest in language functions theory. Numerous studies have been conducted research that concerned with language functions in various subjects. Such as language functions in advertisement (Maerobah, 2018), in songs (Drama, 2019), in medical conversation (Susanthi, Pastika, Yadhya, & Saraswati, 2018), in English club (Asdar, 2017), in a vlog (Khasanah, 2017). The previous studies mentioned above focused only on finding and analyzing the types of language functions found in the research studies. Furthermore, several studies concern language functions in different focus on the study. Sartika (2016)

conducts language functions focused on analyzing the language functions and the meaning behind Hillary Clinton's language functions in the USA's presidential debates in 2016. Then, the research of language function in classroom discourse (Ambrosio, Binalet, Ferrer, & Yang, 2015) focused on identifying the kinds of language functions in children's discourse especially in social classroom interaction. In this study, the researcher found that children's classroom discourse leads to learning experiences through language functions that determine children's purpose in the negotiation of meaning in their talk. At the same time, Sulfa (2017) conducting language functions in surah Yusuf of the holy Qur'an. In this study, the researcher focused on the types of language functions used by Prophet Yusuf and Zulaikha and the differences between male and female language. The researcher found that referential function is mainly used by Prophet Yusuf, while Zulaikha mostly used expressive function. While in the language gender, the writer found that Prophet Yusuf speaks forcefully and gently, while Zulaikha mostly speaks emotionally.

Moreover, several studies conducted language functions that used social media such as Twitter and Instagram as the subject of the studies; they are research studies conducted by (Anggario, 2016; Chofiyya, 2016; Khoir, 2016). The two studies are focused on finding the types of language functions and describe the context behind the language functions. In contrast, one of the three studies above focused on analyzing language functions and politeness strategies. Furthermore, numerous research studies conduct language functions in movies. The first is a research study conducted on language functions by Yulistiono

(2015). In this research, the researcher used the theory of language functions proposed by Roman Jakobson. Also, to describe the most dominant types of language functions used by the main character that is Solomon Northup, a man in the "*12 Years a Slave*" movie. This study showed that there are 117 from 199 data that consist of referential functions and becomes the most dominant type of language function. Then, (Putri, Safnil, & Kasmains (2018) also conducted language functions that have the same focus as the previous study explained before that are to find the kinds of language functions and describe the most dominant type of language functions based on the theory proposed by Roman Jakobson. In this research, the writer found that only 5 out of 6 language functions were found in the movie. Therefore, the referential function becomes the most dominant type of language function, with 35.2% of the total language function found in the movie.

Ardianto (2015) analyzing language functions that focused on finding language functions proposed by Holmes theory and identifying the effects of using language function found in the conversation between the caretaker and a nine-year-old boy with autism. In the study, the researcher found 41 utterances used by the caretaker in talking to autistic children. Moreover, the caretaker's language function gives an effect like a verbal and non-verbal response. Karmila (2019) conducted language functions that have the same focus as the research studies explained before, but these two research studies have a different result. In this study, the researcher shows five language functions used by the main character in "White House Down" film. There are expressive function, directive





instrumentalities, norms, and genre, which appeared on the primary character utterances in the movie.

From the numerous previous studies above, it can be seen that many researchers emphasized language functions by using different subjects, research problems, and different proposed theories. By all of these, the researcher interests in conducting similar research by using language functions as the topic. The researcher used a movie entitled “Little Women” as the object of the study. However, this study is different from the previous studies already mentioned above. Because iIn this present study, the researcher emphasizes analyzing the language functions proposed by Janet Holmes (2013) and analyzing the context of language function based on Hymes (1974).

The researcher chooses language functions as the topic of this research because language is the most important thing used by humans to occur communication deliver various aims and purposes to each other in daily life. There are many functions of language that benefit humans, such as expressing feelings, ideas, emotions, asking for something, and so on. Furthermore, the knowledge of language function has excellent importance for communication because it helps the hearer get more understanding about the meaning behind the utterances by knowing the context of the situation when the speaker produces utterances that are delivered to the hearer. So that the hearer can get a clear understanding of what the speaker conveys and avoid any misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer.

The researcher used the movie as the object of the study because many people like to watch movies in their spare time, even many of them watching movies as their hobby. Also, through the movie, people can get much knowledge, social value, and morals depicted in the movie because of the various genres. In this present study, the researchers choose the "Little Women" movie (2019). That is because the researcher can only access or download the newest version of the movie that is released on 2019. Besides this movie This movie is fascinating to watch because it tells about the life of four young women who have family relations as sisters. Those four women are called the March sisters; they are Meg March, Jo March, Beth March, and Amy March. These March sisters have different personalities that portray in the movie.

Moreover, they have different dreams and are wanted to live their life on their own terms. However, as sisters, they always try to give support and taking care of each other. In the movie, some conversations occur between sisters. Those conversations mostly contain various language functions depending on the context of situations when the utterances are produced. Although several previous studies mentioned above analyze language functions in movies, none have been done conducting language functions produced in the utterances between sisters. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting research about language functions produced by the main characters in the "Little Women" movie.

Based on the explanation above, this present study was designed to analyze the types of language functions produced by the main characters of "Little Women" movie (2019) and the context behind the language functions in the



#### 1.4 Scope and Limitation

This present research focuses on discourse analysis. This study is limited to finding the types of language function and interpreting the context in "Little Women" movie (2019). The researcher examines the language functions from the utterances produced by the main characters such as Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy based on Janet Holmes' (2013) theory of language functions. On the other hand, the researcher applied the theory of context proposed by Dell Hymes (1974) to respond to the second problem statement of the context of language functions used by the main characters in the "Little Women" movie (2019). The main characters' utterances that the researcher selects consist of language functions as the limitation of discussion in this study.

#### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Discourse analysis** is the study of language in use and analysis between written and spoken data.
2. **Language functions** are the way we deliver our utterances for specific purposes. For example, whether to express our thought, emotion, or to ask for help, give commands, and so on.
3. **Context** is the situation that is taking place. Through context, we can understand what is being said without get more understanding what the words being used mean is.
4. **Little Women movie** is a film adaptation of the 1868 novel of the same title by Louisa May Alcott, which became an American drama film written and directed by Greta Gerwig in 2019.





conversation, and also the saving of both speaker and hearer's face. For example, when two strangers are shivering at a bus stop in the freezing wind, and one turns to the other and says, 'My goodness, it is cold,' it indicates that the speaker wants to be friendly in talking. A lot of ordinary everyday conversation appears to consist of one person commenting on something present that is visible to both the speaker and the listener.

Furthermore, in this study, the researcher uses the theory of language function proposed by Janet Holmes (2013). In his book, Holmes (2013, p. 275) stated that there are eight categories of speech functions, each with its own set of characteristics and purposes. They are expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, phatic, heuristic, and commissive functions. Many linguists recognize three of them. However, the precise labels they are given may differ but they appear to be basic functions of language because they derive from the essential components of any interaction. Those three functions are expressive (addressor), directive (addressee), and referential (message). Meanwhile, the following will describe the categorization of the eight types of language functions.

### **2.2.1 Expressive Function**

Holmes (2013, p.275) said that expressive utterances express the speaker's feelings. Furthermore, the term of expression concentrated on the speaker's thoughts, attitude, needs, and opinions, which were communicated using various words and intonation. People can express themselves by drawing conclusions based on their experiences. People may express their feelings in order to

communicate their emotions. These expressions are influenced by social factors as well as the expression's positive nature. For example, *I am feeling great today*.

### 2.2.2 Directive Function

Directive utterances attempt to get someone to do something (Holmes, 2013, p. 275). The Directive function is to use the language to manage one's activities, influence, and manage the others. On the other hand, this function is designed to give orders or requests through interrogative, declarative, and imperative statements. Imperative sentences can make a stringent request like saying (e.g., cleaning up the table) or being less demanding using a politeness strategy (e.g., Clear the table, please). The explanation above says that language is a means of control consisting of demanding action, suggesting action, wanting action, dealing with permission, handling duties or expectations, and asking for information.

### 2.2.3 Referential Function

Holmes (2013, 275) stated that referential utterances aims to provide information. The referential function is a function that shows the status of speakers who want to share knowledge or news with the listener. In this case, by reporting the sensory information they take in or considering, people may comment on it. This function may use various forms, such as statements. For example, *At the third stroke, it will be three o'clock precisely*. Or question statements, for example, *where are you now?*





function is glossed as the "tell me why" function. The study of children's language acquisition revealed the need for this function, in which language is used to learn and discover. For example, *why tree's leaf color is green?*

### 2.2.8 Commissive Function

Holmes (2013, p. 276) stated that commissive function is a function which deals with promises and threats, and with marriage vows, bets, and declaration of war. Similarly, the precise words uttered at particular points are crucial in a wedding ceremony. So it is possible to add a variety of other categories that may be helpful and illuminating for detailed analyses. In conclusions, this function is used to tell the hearer about what the speaker want to do in the future such as commits or plans.

From the explanations above, the researcher concludes that there are various functions of language used by humans in their communication. However, those functions are mainly used to deliver the aim of the speaker to the hearer correctly. Therefore, it is important to understand the mean or the aim of what the speaker conveys to avoid any misunderstanding when doing communication.

## 2.3 Context

Cook (1989, p. 10) defines a context can be defined as a type of knowledge of the world that can be used broadly and narrowly. Furthermore, Paltridge (2006, p. 54) states that understanding how language functions in context essential to understanding the relationship between what is said and understood both spoken and written discourse. It requires considering how speakers organize what they

want to say, following whom they are talking to, where is the communication take place, when is the conversation occur, and under what circumstances. From the explanation above, it can be said that it is essential to understand the context of the speaker's utterances to help the hearer or reader to reveal the literal or the intended meaning of the speaker's utterances. Besides, in order to analyze speech events, some factors should be considered.

There are some theory about context of situations proposed by many expets, one of them is proposed by Dell Hymes (1974). Hymes says that aside from the linguistic aspects, other factors such as the communication setting, goals, and participants is important in understanding the situations of speech. Hymes proposed the factors of context which called as SPEAKING models. The explanation of the term SPEAKING can be seen as follows:

1. 'S' refers to the setting which is the concrete physical circumstances consist of when the time and where the place in which the communication occurs. Participants which are in specific setting can change the scenes as they change the level of formality or the types of activity in which they are involved. the example of setting; September, 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 16 a.m. in front of a mosque in the city of Surabaya.
2. 'P' refers to the participants that fill specific roles in a communication. There must be at least two people or more that are involved in a communication. One person as the speaker or addresser and the other as the hearer or addressee. It is also incudes the relationship between the participants. The roles of the participants can be change during their interactions.

3. 'E' is refer to the ends of communication. End also refers to the purposes, aims, goals, or expected outcomes that the participations seek to achieve on specific events.
4. 'A' is refers to the act sequences that includes the form and the content. It refers to the actual form and order of speech acts which built the event. It can be the plot of the story presented to the speaker. The act sequence consists of the turn-taking and interrupting by the partiipants in the conversation. In other hand, act sequence is how the speech act performed in a conversation.
5. 'K' is the key that refers to the tone, manner, or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed, such as serious, precise, lighthearted, pedantic, mocking, sarcastic, pompous, and so on. The key may also be marked nonverbally by specific behavior, posture, gesture, or even deportment.
6. 'I' refers to the instrumentalities. It refers to the choice of the channel, such as oral, written, or telegraphic, and to the primary form of speech employed. Also it can be delivered in various ways such as formal, informal, casual, or friendly.
7. 'N' refers to the norms in a interactions. Norms is the social rules that guide the event and the actions and reactions of the participants. These rules can determined how specific acts are interpreted. Its also defines what is socially acceptable in communication.
8. 'G' refers to the genre or the types of event or speech act given, such as poems, proverbs, riddles, sermons, prayers, lectures, and editorials. Different types of speechacts have different or particular terms for the genre.

## 2.4 Little Women Movie (2019)

Little women movie is a 2019 American film directed by Greta Gerwig. Little women's movie reflects back and forth on the life of four young women called March sisters who live in the middle of the nineteenth century. They are Meg March, Jo March, Beth March, and Amy March. Although they are sisters, they have different dreams and are determined to live their life on their terms. This movie depicted a family, dreams, sacrifice, and love relevant to real life. The story of this movie is adapted from a novel with the same name, which is inspired based on the author's experience, namely Louisa May Alcott. This movie was first released on December 25<sup>th</sup> 2019, in the United States.

Furthermore, according to (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>), several awards and nominations have been given to Little Women's movie (2019). The film winning for Best Costume Design after received six nominations at the 92 Academy Awards. While at the 25th Critic's Choice Awards, Little Women movie (2019) gets nine nominations and won one of the Best Adapted Screenplay nominations. Moreover, this film also received five nominations at the 73rd British Academy Film Awards and two nominations at the 77th Golden Globe Awards. It was also chosen as one of the top ten films of the year by the American Film Institute.

In this movie, the March sisters have different characteristics. However, they always try to taking care and support of each other. The second oldest, Jo, becomes the center among those four main characters. She is described as an outspoken tomboy character with a passion for writing. Besides, like her other three sisters, Jo loves her family and sisters, which makes her prioritize her family

before her own needs. The story begins in the winter of 1861 when the March sisters sit in their living room listening to their mother, namely Marmee, who read a letter from their father, Mr. March, who is serving as a Union chaplain in the civil war. Later that day, on Christmas morning, their mother pleases the girls to give their breakfast to a poor family, the Hummels. One day, Jo sells her hair to help finance her mother's trip, who will go to tend their father, who is sick in the hospital in Washington DC. After Marmee left the house, those four young women are busy with chores they had to finish. Beth, the third sister, decided to visit the Hummels family to give them some food. Nevertheless, after Beth returns home, she got a fever. It is because she contacts the baby of Hummels family who is suffering from scarlet fever.

Three years later, Meg, the oldest one of March's sisters, married a man named Mr. Brooke, then she moves to a new house with her husband. Soon, she gives birth to twins Demi and Daisy. While the youngest, Amy, got a chance to accompany Aunt Carroll on her trip to Paris. It is because Aunt Carroll prefers a ladylike woman just like Amy. In short, Jo moves to New York to get a job. She lives in a boarding house and gets a job as a teacher for some children there. Besides, Jo has a dream to become a writer. So, she attempts to write a story and goes to the publishing office to offer her story. A few days passed, suddenly, Jo got a letter from her mother, tells her that Beth's condition is getting worse. Because of that, Jo is going home immediately to take care of Beth to hope that her health will get better. However, in the end, after suffering some years ago, Beth cannot resist her illness anymore that caused her to die.

After that, Amy comes back home from Paris. She was shocked at the news she had heard and felt very sad and missed Beth. That day, Amy tells Jo that she already married a man, Laurie, their neighbor who studies in Paris. Jo feels so lonely because her sisters cannot be with her, just like in their childhood. Meg and Amy are already married, while Beth has died. Jo decided to write a story about her and her beloved sister's life and make it into a novel to get rid of those feelings. In the middle of her writing, a man named Mr. Friedrich comes to her house. He was lived in the same boarding house as Jo in New York. A year later, Jo married Mr. Friedrich. Furthermore, at the end of the story, the family happily gathered together, and Jo feels so happy because the novel she writes is finally published.

















included in the context of the situation. The terms SPEAKING are referring to the setting, the participants, the ends, the act sequence, the key, the instrument, the norm, and the genre. The main characters in the movie delivered the aims in their communication through considered their position and to whom they talk.

Therefore, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy have equal status as the main characters are sisters and daughters that make them talk informally to each other.

Furthermore, the researcher analyze the data by describing the context behind the language functions followed by the explanation about the types language functions used by the four main characters. The researcher applied the theory proposed by Janet Holmes (2013) to analyze the types of language functions. There are eight types of language functions: expressive function, directive function, referential function, metalinguistics function, poetic function, phatic function, heuristic function, and commissive function. Also, the theory of SPEAKING models proposed by Dell Hymes (1974) is used to describe the context of the main characters utterances that consists of language functions in this study. The explanations of the research finding can be seen as follow:

#### **4.1.1.1 Expressive Functions**

According to Holmes (2013, p. 275), expressive utterances express the speaker's feelings. Furthermore, the term of expression concentrated on the speaker's thoughts, attitude, needs, and opinions, which communicated using various words and intonation. People can express themselves by drawing conclusions based on their experiences. People may express their feelings in order to communicate their emotions. These expressions are influenced by social factors





















































focused on the language functions that occur between sisters with an equal status that none of the previous studies have conducted before. This present study intends to give knowledge about the use of language function by women in movies. The main characters in the movie are consisting of four young women. Here, March sisters were being raised in the same environment which make them more comfortable and related to each other. That is why they can express their thoughts, minds, needs, opinions, and feelings to each other. Its also make them mainly used the type of speech that is informal in their utterances. Else, the use of language functions depends on the context of the situation that makes them considered to whom they speak, where they are doing the communication, and what the aims of their utterances. In addition, the researcher found that in this research, there are various functions of language used by the main characters to delivers their utterances depends on the aims when they talk to the hearer. Such as expressing their feelings, providing information, giving orders, showing their sociability, discovering something, committing to doing something, and producing aesthetic features of the language.





poetic function. Meanwhile, the researcher is doesn't found any utterances that consist of metalinguistics function in the movie.

Furthermore, the researcher found that there are several factors that influenced the use of language functions by the main characters in the movie. The factors are also called the context of situations. There are eight components in the context of situations such as the setting, the participants, the end or purposes, the act sequence, the key, the instrument, the norm, and the genre. In the movie, the main characters mainly deliver their utterances orally and in informal way when they communicate with each other because they have equal status as sisters. Besides, the setting is mostly in the March house, it is because as a family they are live all together in a house.

From the explanation above, the researcher concluded that there are seven types of language functions found in this research. Moreover, the main characters mainly used expressive function in their utterances. It is because they want to deliver how and what are they feelings such as angry, sad, happy, excited, upset, and feels sorry. Although they are sisters which mean there are older sisters like Meg and Jo while Beth and Amy are the younger sisters, they still talk casually to each other without thinking about the age difference between them. Furthermore, when they want to deliver the aims in their utterances, they use language functions depends to whom they talk with, where the communication is occurs, and what the aims or purposes that they want the hearer to understand.





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