

**MOOD AND MODALITY USED BY THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN  
“ONWARD” MOVIE**

**THESIS**



**BY:**

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
UIN SUNAN AMPEL SURABAYA**

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2021**

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MOOD AND MODALITY USED BY THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN  
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Approved to be examined by the Board of Examiners, English Department,  
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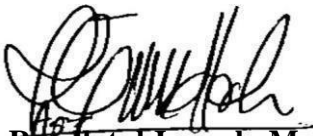
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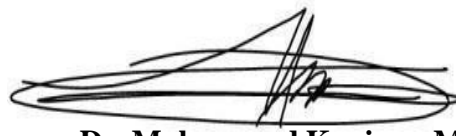
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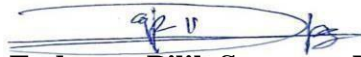
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language in SFL is related to the speaker's experiences of happening, being, or doing to the real world; the interaction between the speaker and hearer by taking on roles, by expressing, by understanding the speaker's attitudes, and judgments; and the organization of their perceptions of the world in spoken or written text. These are called ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings.

In this research, the researcher chooses the interpersonal meaning as the focus of this present research. According to Thompson (2014, p. 45), interpersonal meaning plays an important role in establishing and maintaining social relations. It means that interpersonal meaning is used to create personal and social relationships. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 106) refer to it clause as exchange through the system of MOOD and modality. It can be seen from the Mood element which build the interpersonal meaning. Besides, the interpersonal meaning can reveal how far the speaker accepts or takes responsibility for the attitude being expressed. It means that the speaker may express their point of view subjectively or objectively (Thompson, 2014, p. 73).

MOOD is the clausal system that shows how clauses for different types of interaction are realized. Based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 108), the speaker adopted four speech functions: statement, question, offer, and command. Those four basics of speech functions are depended on the speech roles (giving or demanding) and commodity choice (information or goods and services) that the speaker chooses. In line with this, Thompson (2014, p. 48) points out that MOOD indicates the clause types that belong to declarative, interrogative, or imperative. For example, a statement is expressed by declarative MOOD; question and offer



by interrogative MOOD; and command by imperative MOOD. Besides, MOOD types can be broken down from its formula, whether it consists of Mood and Residue element, Mood element only, or Residue only.

Modality shows the speaker's attitude, judgment, or assessment about the certainty of what she/he is talking about. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 128), modality expresses a different degree of probability, usuality, obligation, and inclination. The speaker may show the degree to which the speaker commits herself to the validity of what she/he says or show the responsibility to which the attitude/judgment is being expressed. The speaker can indicate that she/he has a particular point of view about what she/he is saying. The speaker may express their point of view in a way that makes it clear (subjective); or they may do it in a way that the point of view by making it appear to be a quality of the event itself (objective) (Thompson, 2014, p. 73).

From the previous explanation, some studies have been done in analyzing the topic of interpersonal meaning. Hadiani (2019) investigated the interpersonal meaning in students' explanation texts. Her results show that students have employed the declarative mood in the texts. The order of subject and finite show the structure in declarative mood. The use of declarative in students' texts is relevant with the purpose of explanation texts which is to give information. The modal finite such as, *can*, *will*, *could*, and *must* in an explanation text are applied to express the students' opinion towards a specific utterance in the text whether it is to indicate the probability, usuality, or obligation in low degree of modality. It

indicates that the students try to present factual information by giving an equal relationship with the reader.

Then, Nasita, Sugiarto, and Thoyyibah (2020) elaborated the interpersonal meaning on male and female students' personal letters through Mood and modality types. Their findings show that declarative clauses is used by both male and female students as well as the purpose of the letter-writing, which is to give information. In terms of modality, the modalization in terms of usuality is used by both male and female students. It indicates that both male and female showed high confidence toward the trueness of something happen.

Another research on interpersonal meaning was conducted by Sunardi (2013), who focused on a casual conversation. The casual conversation is between a native speaker (an American female) and a non-native speaker (an Indonesian male). His study reveals that an Indonesian male was unsure of the truth of the propositions he exchanged in the conversation compared to an American female. Furthermore, an Indonesian male is preferred by using subjective orientation, while an American female is preferred by judging something on behalf of others.

Moreover, Mayangsari (2020) examined interpersonal meaning through the modality types, values, and orientations used by the students in their argumentative essays. Her research showed that 165 sentences contained modality and indicated that the writers' interpersonal meanings had different types, values, and orientations. She found that median value such as modal 'will' was the most popular value in students' argumentative essays. The students tended to use

explicit objective orientation to show the objectiveness of their arguments to persuade the readers by giving some possibilities and expressing their ideas objectively without any prejudices.

One of the examples of interpersonal meaning can be seen in the movie through the main characters. Movie is one media in which language to communicate, deliver a message, and build a relationship between some characters. The researcher found from previous studies above that most researchers analyzed the interpersonal meaning in written text such as explanation texts, personal letters, and argumentative essays. In this study, the researcher uses the "Onward" movie as the object of the study. The "Onward" movie represents family, brother relationship, struggle, and love based on the real-life of the director. The director portrays himself in one of the main characters named Ian Lightfoot.

This movie is inspiring to analyze because it tells about the brother relationship between Ian and Barley Lightfoot. This movie wants to bring back the father figure who has died. Therefore, Ian and Barley Lightfoot have to do the quests and find another Phoenix Gem before the sunset as soon as their father can reappear. As a movie set in a magical era, the director made each character mythical creatures such as elves, manticore, cyclops, faun, pixie, and goblin where humans do not exist. Moreover, the movie has many scenes of the brother's relationship, portrayed by the main characters. Therefore, the researcher only focuses on the main characters, Ian and Barley Lightfoot, as they perform how each other builds relationships.

From the previous explanation, it can be said that the main characters in the movie usually has a position in carrying out the storyline as well as in research by Permatasari (2019), who analyzed the type of MOOD and modality of the main characters in "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe and Prince Caspian" movie named Peter. She chooses Peter to find out how a brother communicates with his younger siblings through utterances. The results showed that the older brother, Peter, uses declarative sentences with a Subject + Finite clause structure and the median value of the modality when he talks to his younger siblings. The declarative sentences used by Peter show that he prefers to provide information rather than give questions or orders. The use of modality shows that as the eldest brother, Peter wants to show his power in controlling his younger siblings, especially by using the median value of the modality. Kusnadi (2018) researched the Mood system in the utterances between Poppy and Branch in "Trolls" movie. She found that the most dominant speech function in Poppy and Branch's utterances was a statement. It shows that Poppy was more informative than Branch. The characteristics of Poppy can be identified where she was more giving than demanding. Meanwhile, Branch was more active in demanding than giving.

This present study is conducted to reveal the interpersonal meaning through MOOD and modal responsibility used by the main characters. The researcher analyzes the data of this research by using Halliday's theory (2014). The theory is used to find types of MOOD and modal responsibility. Therefore, this study is worth to conduct because the result can be used to see the importance of the clausal system as a tool to represent the interpersonal meaning.







In SFL, the theory aims to match form to function and meaning. It means that SFL is more describing what language is used for (the function) or, in other words, the writer's purpose in writing the sentence than describing the structure of the sentence. Halliday argues that three functions are used to explore how meanings are created. These can be summarized into the experiential (the speaker uses languages to talk about the world), the interpersonal (the speaker uses language to interact with other people), and the textual (the speaker uses language to fit in its context). Each of these meanings is encoded in the clausal systems in SFL.

## **2.2 Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics**

First produced by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday in the early 1960s, Systemic Functional Linguistics became a new grammar approach. SFL sees language as a system of choices to make meaning. It is also functional when its function is not for specifying what language structure is but what language structure is for. In Systemic theory, language has three main functional elements: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Those three functional elements are organized into three types of meaning: the experiential meaning, the textual meaning, and the interpersonal meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 30)

The experiential meaning represents actions, events, and situations from what goes around the speaker. It represents the patterns of experience through the transitivity system in a process, participant, and circumstance choice. The textual meaning is concerned with creating the text with ideational and interpersonal meanings. It is realized in the system called theme and rheme. Then, the



interpersonal meaning is concerned with the interaction between speaker and hearer. The way to realize interpersonal meaning is in the clausal system called MOOD and modality.

### **2.3 Interpersonal Meaning**

Interpersonal meaning is one out of three meanings in SFL. It focuses on the meaning where the speaker uses language to interact with other people. In SFL, the term 'interact' means that the speaker is exchanging. Through interpersonal meaning, the purpose of the speaker can be seen whether she/he influences the hearer, demands particular action from the hearer, or judges commit to what she/he is saying. Thompson (2014, p. 45) states that interpersonal meaning concerns with the use of language to interact, to establish and to maintain appropriate personal and social links with them. Moreover, he adds that interaction means having a purpose for saying things, whether the speaker wants to influence the hearer's attitudes, to provide information, or to explain the speaker's attitudes. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 135) argue that interpersonal meaning is considered clause as an exchange when the speaker is taking the speech role and the commodity of exchanged. The speech role is giving and demanding. The commodity that the speaker may be giving or demanding is information or goods & services. When language is used to exchange information, the clause takes on the form of a proposition. It is also different for goods & services that are being exchanged; Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 139) refer to a proposal.



















concerned with the role of language in the activity that is going on. Tenor is concerned with the relationships between the people involved in the communication. Then, mode is concerned with the understanding of language use, whether in written or spoken text (Thompson, 2014, p. 40).

In SFL, tenor is one variable in the context of a situation where the interpersonal meaning occurs. It refers to who speaks in communication and deals with what kind of status and role that the speaker takes. It can be seen in relation to the negotiations carried out in the relationship between the speaker and hearer. For example, someone does not talk to her friend the same way as talking to her mother. It can be said that the way the speaker uses/chooses the language depends on the role that the speaker takes. Through SFL, interpersonal meanings which express a speaker's attitudes and judgments are affected by tenor.

## **2.6 Modality**

Modality is related to the speaker's assessment, attitude, or judgment of probabilities and obligations on what she/he is saying. Downing and Locke (2006, p. 380) add modality into two different kinds of attitude. They are about the validity of proposition, including probability and usuality or intervening in the speech event by laying down obligations or giving permission. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 178) point out that modality is the polarity between *yes* or *no* that has two types: modalization and modulation. Modularization contains degrees of probability and usuality when a clause contains information or acts as a proposition. Meanwhile, the types of modulation contain degrees of obligation













































**Data 9**

Ian : “Visitation Spell?”  
 Barley : “I don't believe this.” (*Excited*) This spell brings him back. For one whole day, Dad will be back!”  
 Laurel : “What?”  
 Ian : “Back?! Like back to life? **That's not possible.**”  
 Barley : (*holding up staff*) “It is with this.”

The conversation takes place in Lightfoot's room. Ian looks back under the cloth and sees a rolled-up piece of parchment. A letter from their late father said that the “Visitation Spell” could help them bring their father back as long as the magic did not fade away. Barley takes another page of the letter from Ian and examines it. It reads “Visitation Spell” and has a diagram of a wizard staff with a beam of light shooting from it, forming a person. Ian's utterance is considered declarative as it consists of the Subject and Finite. The Subject “that” is indicating that the spell can bring his father back. The Finite “is not” shows the negative polarity, which means the possibility for his father back to life. Ian used declarative to declare that his father will not come back to life only caused by the “Visitation Spell.”

**Data 10**

Barley : “Uh, Quests of Yore isn't just a board game, it's a historically based role playing scenario. Did you know in the old days centaurs could run seventy miles an hour?”  
 Colt : “I own a vehicle, don't need to run.”  
 Barley : “Well, Ian, you could definitely learn a lot from Quests of Yore. You want to play?”  
 Ian : “**I don't.**”  
 Barley : “You could be a crafty rogue, or... ooh, I know! You can be a wizard.”

















































Firstly, the present study shows that the main characters use all of the MOOD types in their utterances: declarative, interrogative, and imperative MOOD. The main characters used and matched with the function of each type of MOOD. He adopts declarative MOOD in line with the basic function of declarative MOOD, which is the expression of a statement. It also can be seen from Mood element consists of Subject and Finite. In terms of exchange, Ian gives information and takes on the role of a declarer. He mostly declares information related to the 'new' Ian about his emotions, feelings, and ideas. It proves that most of the utterances of the main characters consist of declarative MOOD, which occurs 291 times. It is in line with the research's findings on the previous studies on movies, such as Permatasari (2019), who analyzed MOOD and modality in the main characters in movie. Her study shows that the main characters named Peter mostly employs declarative MOOD in his utterances. It also can be said that the main character has the highest power as the eldest brother which has the right to have an opinion or state more than his three brothers. In another previous study, Kusnadi (2018) investigated MOOD types in movie. She shows that the most dominant of MOOD types is declarative. In "Onward" movie, the main characters tend to use declarative MOOD that have a subject and finite clause structure. He prefers to provide information rather than gives or demands goods & services.

The interrogative MOOD is also realized in utterances of the main characters. He prefers adopting an interrogative MOOD in expressing a question rather than offering goods & services. The interrogative MOOD occurred 57 times. It can be known by breaking down Mood element consists of Finite and Subject or WH-



usuality, obligation, and inclination. The main characters used implicit subjective for 31 times, and explicit subjective for 19 times. The main characters mostly show their judgment clearly in the same clause as the main proposition by using the first-person pronoun as it is performed subjectively. For example, the utterance “No way, I’ll do the talking” that is performed by Ian in the form of declarative. In this scene, the boys are trying to disguise the cops which blocking his way. Ian indirectly commands Barley to be behind him as long as Ian the only one who has the magic gift. Here, the use of first person shows that Ian is subjectively state that he will do the talking. Then, implicit showed that Ian expresses his point of view in the same clause as what he said.

Barley has memories of their father until in small detail. Barley never lost faith in his brother despite a bit of teasing and is always by his side. He has a solid dedication to Ian and fully believes that he can bring their father back to life and summon magic to return to their world. Barley has stood by Ian's side throughout his brother's life and encouraged him to go beyond his self-doubt to try new things. Ian did not fully realize this until he finished the quests and had fulfilled Ian's checklist to spend time with their father.









