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Exchange roles in reviewer-student's virtual interaction: A case study on English department students' presentation in Indonesia

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Abstract

The pandemic of COVID-19 that hit the world brought many changes in interaction and how exchanges are realized. Previous studies do not explore more about interaction during the pandemic by using systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory. Therefore, this study explores how exchange roles are realized in students' presentation during proposal seminar held by the English department of Universitas Sumatera Utara. This study employed qualitative content analysis method. The source of the data was from recorded Zoom video of students' presentation during proposal seminar examination. The data were in the form of utterances uttered by students and proposal reviewers (lecturer) and were generated by Sonix.ai and double-checked manually to maintain the reliability of the data. The findings reveal that variations found in speech function include the pattern of statement (S)-acknowledge statement (AS), question (Q)-response statement to questions (RSQ), command (C)-response offer to command (ROC), and offer (O). In terms of Mood system, the declarative Mood occurred in some speech functions such as statement (S), acknowledge statement (AS), respond Statement to question (RSQ), respond offer to command (ROC), and offer (O). The interrogative Mood was also found in the form of yes/no interrogative type and the second is WH-type. Imperative Mood was also found in the form of command (C). These variations in speech function and Mood occur as a result of the communicative purpose of the speakers in a given context. This study has the implication that other disciplines could find parallels and takeaways that could be applied to their own student presentation scenarios, fostering interdisciplinary learning and collaboration. Then, this study also offers a deeper understanding of the dynamics of reviewer-student interactions during presentations. This understanding can lead to the development of more effective pedagogical strategies for teaching presentation skills and fostering constructive feedback.

Keywords: exchange roles, interaction, mood, proposal seminar, speech function



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Public Interest Statement

This study delves into the dynamics of student presentations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, employing systemic functional linguistics theory. Analyzing exchanges during proposal seminars, it reveals diverse speech functions and mood variations. These findings offer insights beyond linguistics, fostering interdisciplinary learning opportunities. Moreover, the study sheds light on reviewer-student interactions, informing pedagogical strategies for enhancing presentation skills and feedback mechanisms. By exploring communication nuances in virtual settings, this research addresses the evolving educational landscape, contributing to effective teaching methodologies and promoting collaborative learning across disciplines in a post-pandemic world.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the way we communicate, pushing various domains, including education, to adapt rapidly to the virtual environment (DeFilippis et al., 2022; Gabbiadini et al., 2020) Europe, and the Middle East. Using de-identified, aggregated meeting and email meta-data from 3,143,270 users, we find, compared to pre-pandemic levels, increases in the number of meetings per person (+12.9 percent. As physical interactions shifted to online platforms, universities and academic institutions worldwide faced the challenge of conducting proposal seminars virtually (Dermawan et al., 2020; Dutta, 2022; Li, 2022; Voronova et al., 2021) East Java, Indonesia”, ”event-title”: ”International Joint Conference on Science and Engineering (IJCSE 2020. This shift not only affected the mode of communication but also brought forth the need to investigate the speech function within these virtual interactions. This study aims to explore the speech function in virtual proposal seminar interactions, drawing on the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics. By examining the realization of speech functions in these contexts, we seek to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics and implications of communication in the digital realm.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions to embrace virtual communication platforms as an alternative to face-to-face interactions (Adipat, 2021; Salarvand et al., 2023). This transition has had a profound impact on the dynamics of communication between lecturers and students. While virtual communication provides flexibility and accessibility, it also introduces new challenges and opportunities. Some challenges such as virtual communication platforms come with their own set of technological constraints. Issues such as poor audio or video quality, lagging or dropped connections, and limited functionalities can disrupt the flow of interaction and impact the realization and interpretation of speech functions. Participants may need to adapt their communication strategies to overcome these technical challenges.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) offers a theoretical framework that allows us to analyze the functions of language in social contexts (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Saragih, 2006). This linguistic approach emphasizes the interplay between language structure, social context, and the functions that language serves within a given situation. SFL provides tools to investigate how language is used to fulfill different communicative purposes, such as providing information, expressing opinions, requesting clarification, and more (Diana et al., 2022; Eggins, 2004; Saragih, 2006).

In SFL, exchange roles are realized through speech function and Mood. This exchange role is discussed under interpersonal metafunction (Eggins, 2004; Saragih, 2006). There are four types of speech functions; those are offer, statement, command, and question (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen,

2014). Eggins (2004) claims that when the role (giving and demanding) and the commodity (information and good & services) are intersected. Additionally, the speech function of clauses are much determined by the speech roles and the commodity exchanged.

Mood refers to the clause structure that is the grammaticalization of speech function (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Yang & Gao, 2020). In other words, Mood is the realization of speech function (Rahman et al., 2019). Mood structure is made up of two components: (1) the subject, which is a noun or pronoun that concord with the verb and the subject is generally a nominal element, (2) the finite is a component of the verbal group that expresses tense (is, am, are, was, were, have, had) and modality (shall, will, can, must, may). There are some typical Moods in these data, namely declarative, interrogative, and imperative, offer, and minor. In addition, Ramadhani & Rustandi (2018) state that speech function is associated to Mood in clause. The statement goes along with declarative Mood in clause; question deals with interrogative; command relates to imperative; offer refers to modulated interrogative; and answer is with elliptical declarative. Meanwhile, acknowledgement, accept, and compliance refer to minor clause (or non-verbal).

Understanding how speech functions are realized in virtual proposal seminar interactions is crucial for comprehending the nuances and strategies employed by participants. The proposal seminar is an integral part of the academic journey, allowing students to present their research plans and receive feedback from faculty members (Hanafiah et al., 2021). In the virtual environment, the dynamics of proposal seminar interactions may differ significantly from those in face-to-face settings. The conversation or interaction may have different pattern if the mode is changed (Zein et al., 2021). The absence of physical presence, non-verbal cues, and spontaneous interactions may affect the way participants engage with each other. Examining the speech function in virtual proposal seminars can help us understand how participants negotiate turn-taking, manage the floor, establish rapport, and achieve their interactional goals in this context. In addition, analyzing speech functions in virtual settings requires careful consideration of how participants compensate for the lack of physical presence and adapt their linguistic strategies to maintain effective communication. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of the specific virtual communication context and the linguistic resources available to participants.

The studies dealing with exchange roles in educational discourse has been conducted in the field of classroom interaction (Aminah et al., 2022; Ashari & Shalehoddin, 2018; Fikri, 2015; Rahman et al., 2019; Ramadhani & Rustandi, 2018), and online classroom interaction (Diana et al., 2022; Indari et al., 2021). Previous studies did not specifically explore how interaction was constructed in students' presentation. Classroom interaction is absolutely different from proposal seminar. So, different from the previous ones, therefore, this study explores how exchange roles are realized in students' presentation of virtual seminar examination held by the English department of Universitas Sumatera Utara.

Referring to the reasons stated in advance, the research question is formulated as how are exchange roles are realized in students' presentation during proposal seminar held by the English department of Universitas Sumatera Utara? So, this research aims to contribute to the broader understanding of online communication and its implications for educational settings. Exploring the exchange roles in virtual proposal seminar interactions can shed light on the unique features and affordances of this medium and help us understand how participants negotiate meaning and construct knowledge in these virtual settings.

Method

This study employed qualitative content analysis method. Content analysis is considered as a suitable method for this research since the data were taken from recordings. The location of the research was in English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara and Platform Zoom Meeting since the proposal seminar. The seminar in English department was chosen since it is regarded to be representative internationally due to the use of English as the medium of communication. The time of the research was from June-July 2022. The source of the data was from recorded Zoom video of students' presentation during proposal seminar examination. The data were in the form of utterances uttered by students (examinee) and proposal reviewers (lecturer) and were generated by Sonix.ai and double-checked manually to maintain the reliability of the data.

In this study, the data collected were used solely for research purposes and reported in a manner that preserves the anonymity of the participants. The privacy and confidentiality of all participants were strictly maintained. To protect their identities, all personal information and data were anonymized and stored securely. Any data or findings presented in this research will be reported in an aggregated and de-identified manner to ensure the confidentiality of individual participants.

Results and Discussion

The results cover the areas of speech function, and mood types. The theory used to analyze the data was interpersonal function (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) from systemic functional linguistics perspective.

A. Speech Function

There are four types of speech functions; those are offer, statement, command, and question (Egins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Egins (2004) also assert that every conversation in the dialogue must include at least one of the speech functions, and each speech function includes the speech role. The realization of the speech function is presented as the followings.

a. Statement (S) – Acknowledge Statement (AS)

Statement (S) used to give information to the hearer and invites the listener to receive that information. A statement is typically started with a subject, followed by a verb or auxiliary verb. In this data, there is statement (S) as speech Function. Here are the examples of the utterances.

Table 1. The Realization of Statement-Acknowledge Statement

No	Text / Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function
1	1 / [01:10:45]	SpV	Only that point I think is better.	Statement
2	1 / [01:10:45]	Rev2	Yah yah, this specific, much better.	Acknowledge Statement

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) mentions speech function and mood are the realization of exchange roles. It is discussed under interpersonal function. From the example above, the utterance (1) is regarded as a statement (S). The context is the supervisor (SpV) uses the statement (S) in the utterance to convey information to the listener (reviewers and examinee). In the utterance, the SpV gives an explanation to focus on that point (related to praat analysis) and he thinks that this will be better. The listener (in this context reviewer2 or Rev2) got the information and had a response or additional information based

on the information obtained. This is called an Acknowledgment Statement (AS) (Eggins, 2004). Speech Function has adjacency pair that cannot stand alone. So, AS is paired with S. In the utterance (2), AS is used by Rev2 to acknowledge statement asserted by SPV additional information based on the S, for example the listener confirms the information given by the speaker. The utterance that contains the response of the information, which is called AS.

b. Question (Q) – Response Statement to Question (RSQ)

A question is an interrogative question if it is used to confirm something, ask about something, or request a response (Lindawati, 2016). Question is a way to demand information in the form of an interrogative statement. It can be an information question (such as a “Wh-question”) or a yes-or-no question that seeks a response from the listener. A question begins with an auxiliary verb or WH. In this data, there is question (Q) as Speech Function. Here are the examples of the utterances:

Table 2. The Realization of Question-Response Statement to Question

No	Text / Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function
3	3 / [01:26:15]	Rev2	<i>Why did you choose this film?</i>	Question
4	3 / [01:26:18]	Ex2	ee ((?)) aaa because this film aa ((?)) about positive symptom = especially about ((schizophrenia))	Response Statement to Question

From the example above, the utterance (3) stated by Rev2 uses question (Q) as a speech function. The context was the speaker uses a question in the utterance to ask something to get information from the listener. The speaker asks the reason why the listener chose the film. In the example above, the question is answered by Examinee 2 (Ex2). The answer to respond to the speaker’s question. The answer is called the Response of statement question (RSQ) (utterance 4). RSQ cannot exist without Q because there is no answer without a question. The utterance (4) is the answer to the question from the utterance (3). The Ex2 answers the reason why chose the film.

c. Command (C) – Response Offer to Command (ROC)

Command is ordering someone to do something which has a technique to get something in return, such as information, a good, or a service. Using an imperative statement, whether it be a positive or negative one, a command is another approach to demanding good and service.

Table 3. The Realization of Command – Response Offer to Command

No	Text / Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function
5	4 / [00:15:44]	Rev1	Say it in your own opinion!	Command
6	4 / [00:15:44]	Ex1	Multimodal is a word that can describe ((ee)) Describe how individuals communicate using	Response Offer to Command

From the utterances in table 3, the utterance (5) reveals the speech function of question (C). The context was the reviewer 1 (Rev1) requests something from the examinee 1 (Ex1), and then Ex1 is asked to deliver the requested information. The speaker asks the listener to give an opinion. Then, Ex1 responds to the request from the speaker, this is called Response Offer to Command (ROC). The utterance (6) is the response from the utterance (5). The Ex1 gives an opinion to fulfill the command from the Rev1.

d. Offer (O)

An offer is a declaration of a person’s willingness to give or perform an act or to put something forward for acceptance or rejection. An offer is another way to describe providing someone with goods or services.

Table 4. The Realization of Offer

No	Text / Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function
7	1 / [00:38:29]	Rev1	[[Coba kalo saya bantu]] sir [[di halaman berapa itu 18 ya tentang plagiarisme == Misalkan ini]] sir [[ambil dari]] generally speaking. [[Nah inikan bingung ini kalo udah]] generally speaking [[ini]] sir == ((Rifman, 2016)) ===	Offer

B. Mood Types

Mood refers to the clause structure that is the grammaticalization of speech function (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) stated that the Mood structure is made up of two components: (1) the subject, which is a noun or pronoun that concord with the verb and the subject is generally a nominal element, (2) the finite is a component of the verbal group that expresses tense (is, am, are, was, were, have, had) and modality (shall, will, can, must, may). There are some typical Moods in these data, namely declarative, interrogative, imperative, offer, and minor.

a. Declarative Mood

In declarative Mood, the Subject in the clause comes first, then followed by the Finite. The declarative Mood is typically used to express a statement and information. In the data, the declarative Mood occurred in some speech functions such as Statement (S), Acknowledge Statement (AS), Respond Statement to Question (RSQ), Respond Offer to Command (ROC), and Offer (O).

Table 5. The Realization of Declarative Mood in Statement

No	Text/Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function	Mood
8	2/[00:17:55]	Rev1	Novel is a world specially made in words by an author = the reality of everyday life.=	Statement	Declarative

The clause from utterance (8) above is a statement that has a declarative Mood, since it follows the Mood structure Subject + Finite. ‘Novel’ has a function as the Subject, meanwhile ‘is’ has a function as the Finite. The context is the Rev1 gives statement to the listener about novel. From the utterances above, it can be considered as declarative Mood.

Table 6. The Realization of Declarative Mood in Acknowledge Statement

No	Text/Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function	Mood
9	4/[00:35:54]	Rev2	I have got the type I don't find any types in the chapter two	Statement	Declarative
10	4/[00:35:54]	Ex1	[Actually it's components sir it's not the type]	Acknowledge Statement	Declarative

The utterance (10) highlights Acknowledge Statement (AS) which has a declarative Mood. Acknowledge Statement (AS) cannot stand alone, because its function is to respond and add information to the Statement (S) that was uttered in (9) previously. The example above shows Rev2 conveyed his utterance first about 'don't find any types', then followed by Ex1 gave the response that 'it's component, not the type'. The response Ex1 gave to Rev2 statement called Acknowledge Statement (AS). The table above shows that Acknowledge Statement (AS) has a declarative Mood, since it follows the structure Subject + Finite. 'It' has the function as the Subject, meanwhile 'is' acts as the Finite.

Table 7. The Realization of Declarative Mood in Response Statement to Question

No	Text/Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function	Mood
11	1/[00:29:40]	Rev1	Hmm. Are you getting my point sir?	Question	Interrogative
12	1/[00:29:40]	Ex	Yeah, I got it sir	Response Statement to Question	Declarative

The utterances (11) and (12) focus on Respond Statement to Question (RSQ) (stated in 12) which has a declarative Mood. RSQ is the adjacency pair of question, and it has a function as a response or answer to a question. The answer commonly comes after the question. It can be said that the Respond Statement to Question (RSQ) must be preceded by a Question (Q). Question is used when the speaker wants to ask the listener to get answers about an information. Generally, the Respond Statement to Question (RSQ) is declarative like the example above. It follows the Mood structure Subject + Finite, 'I' acts as the Subject and 'got' acts as the Finite.

Table 8. The Realization of Declarative Mood in Response Offer to Command

No	Text/Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function	Mood
13	4/[00:15:44]	Rev1	Say it in your own your own opinion.	Command	Imperative
14	4/[00:15:44]	Ex1	Multimodal is a word that can describe ee Describe how individuals communicate using ((?))	Response Offer to Command	Declarative

The utterances (13) and (14) show Respond Offer to Command (ROC) speech function which has a declarative Mood. The function of ROC is to respond to a command. In the example above Rev1 give a command/request that has an imperative Mood to Ex1, after that he did something according to the command of the Rev1. It can be said ROC appears when there is a previous command. The clause of ROC above follows the declarative Mood structure Subject + Finite, 'Multimodal' acts as the Subject and 'is' acts as the Finite.

Table 9. The Realization of Declarative Mood in Offer

No	Text/Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function	Mood
15.	2/[00:17:55]	Rev1	[[Coba kalo saya bantu]] sir [[di halaman berapa itu 18 ya tentang plagiarisme. [[I will try to help you, Sir]]. In page 18 about plagiarism.	Offer	Declarative

The utterance (15) shows the utterances using offer which has a declarative Mood. The ‘offer’ clause above follows the declarative Mood structure Subject + Finite. The pronoun ‘I’ functions as subject while ‘will’ becomes the finite. It means that the minimum requirement as declarative Mood has been fulfilled.

b. Interrogative Mood

Interrogative Mood is divided into two. The first is yes/no interrogative type and the second is WH-type. In yes/no interrogative the Finite comes first then followed by the Subject, meanwhile in WH-type, the clause begins with WH-questions such as Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How. The example of interrogative Mood took from the data as follow:

Table 10. The Realization of Declarative Mood in Question

No	Text/Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function	Mood
16	5/[01:08:19]	Rev1	What is actually the problems in the translation of Samsung 43?	Question	Interrogative

The structure of clause in the utterance (16) above is regarded as interrogative Mood with WH-question type which is ‘What’ comes first, followed by ‘is’ as the finite and ‘actually the problems in the translation of Samsung 43?’ as residue.

c. Imperative Mood

Imperative Mood is used by the speaker to express command, prohibition, or invitation. There are two forms of imperative Mood which are marked and unmarked imperative. Marked imperative has Subject, meanwhile Unmarked does not have any Subject. In the utterance (17) below. It has fulfilled the requirement as imperative mood structure.

Table 10. The Realization of Imperative Mood in Command

No	Text/Minute	Speaker	Utterances	Speech Function	Mood
17	3/[01:53:23]	Rev2	[Think of it, miss salsabila]	Command	Imperative

The imperative mood is used to express commands, requests, suggestions, or invitations. It is a mood that influences how speakers interact with their listeners, aiming to direct or influence their behavior. Imperatives are closely associated with the speech act of “directive,” where the speaker tries to get the listener to do something. Imperatives play a crucial role in expressing the speaker’s interpersonal stance, influencing the relationship between the speaker and the listener.

C. Discussion

The findings reveal that there are variations in the realization of speech function and mood. It is likely that these variations in speech function and mood occur as a result of the communicative purpose of the speakers in a given context. Different speech functions serve different communicative goals, such as making a statement, asking a question, giving a command, or making an offer (Eggins, 2004; Saragih, 2006). The declarative mood is typically used to make a statement or express a fact, while the interrogative mood is used to ask a question (Saragih, 2006). The questions are employed by the examiner in order to explore the knowledge of the examinee. To answer the questions, statement was used and it is labelled as response statement to questions (RSQ).

Variations in speech function and mood can also be influenced by tenor (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Saragih, 2006). It happens because communication is a dynamic process. Tenor is divided into status, affect, contact, and formality. The status realized in the data is unequal since it portrays the status between lecturer (as supervisor and reviewers) and student. Therefore, when the status is unequal, variation of speech function realized in Mood is possible to be found or in other word it affects the congruency of the coding (congruent coding or metaphorical coding) (Saragih, 2006). Tenor plays a central role in the way politeness is enacted through language. Participants need to gauge the social roles and relationships to ensure their language is appropriate and effective for the given situation. They adjust their language choices based on their social roles and the relative power they hold. This helps maintain social harmony and show respect in interactions. That is why metaphorical coding can be a reference of the politeness existence in the interaction.

In the context of students' presentation during proposal seminar which involve participants (especially lecturer) with varying levels of expertise or familiarity with a topic, the tenor can influence how meaning is negotiated. Participants (students and lecturers) might adjust their language to ensure understanding and effective communication. In addition, it is also important to note that speech functions and mood can interact with one another in complex ways, further adding to the variation observed in real-life language use. Understanding these variations and the factors that contribute to them is crucial for effective communication and can provide insight into the ways in which language is used in different contexts.

Conclusion

From the analysis, it can be concluded that there are variations of exchange roles found in the data. In speech function, it was found that there are some patterns including the pattern of statement (S)-acknowledge statement (AS), question (Q)-response statement to questions (RSQ), command (C)-response offer to command (ROC), and offer (O). In terms of Mood system, the declarative Mood occurred in some speech functions such as statement (S), acknowledge statement (AS), respond Statement to question (RSQ), respond offer to command (ROC), and offer (O). The interrogative Mood was also found in the form of yes/no interrogative type and the second is WH-type. Imperative Mood was also found in the form of command (C). These variations in speech function and Mood occur as a result of the communicative purpose of the speakers in a given context. In relation to conclusion, further studies are suggested to explore the exchange roles in health discourse, business discourse, and online streaming discourse.

This study has the implication that other disciplines could find parallels and takeaways that could be applied to their own student presentation scenarios, fostering interdisciplinary learning and collaboration. Then, this study also offers a deeper understanding of the dynamics of reviewer-student interactions during presentations. This understanding can lead to the development of more effective pedagogical strategies for teaching presentation skills and fostering constructive feedback.

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This work is part of doctoral dissertation of the first author, Muhammad Yusuf, submitted to linguistic department, Universitas Sumatera Utara, and under the supervision of the co-authors.

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

Muhammad Yusuf collected the data, drafted, and revised the manuscript. The co-authors, T. Silvana Sinar, T. Thyrhaya Zein, and Nurlela, revised the manuscript. All authors checked the final draft of manuscript.

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