

MODALITY ORIENTATION IN OPRAH WINFREY SHOW FINALE

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are to identify what the orientation of modality used in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale and to describe how the orientation of metaphor of modality are used in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale. The research design used is descriptive qualitative. The data were taken from Oprah's love letter in Oprah Show Finale. The data were collected by downloading the transcript of Oprah's love letter from oprah.com. A letter which is named as 'A Love Letter To You' by Oprah in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale are the data of this research, then the writer classified the data into types of orientations of metaphor of modality, and then drawing conclusion from the text. The result of the research shows that there are four orientations of modality used, they are subjective implicit, objective implicit, subjective explicit, and objective explicit. The ways of using metaphor of modality orientation is by projecting clause and the functions are to emphasize strong belief and create the objectivity.

Keywords: Modality Orientation, Metaphor of Modality, Oprah Winfrey Show Finale

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a way which enables humans to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. By using language they fulfill their daily needs, represent, exchange and organize their experiences. The experiences are exchanged in daily interaction for example in talk shows which are presented through television. Talk show is a program in which at least one host and one guest who act as the interviewee are having conversation concerning a certain topic. One of interesting and popular talk shows in the world is Oprah Winfrey Show.

Oprah Winfrey Show often referred to simply as Oprah, is an American talkshow that produced and hosted by its namesake, Oprah Winfrey. It remains the highest rated talk show in American television history. The show has been highly influential, and many of its topics have penetrated into the American pop cultural consciousness. Winfrey has used the show as an educational platform, featuring book clubs, interviews, self improvement segments, and philanthropic forays into world events. It makes this talkshow causes the host pays more attention to the way she uses language to convey and modalize the messages to be accepted by the listeners. When she wants to modalize their messages, she has to make selections in the modality system.

That is true that Kreidler (1998:299) states that people talk about factual matters, what is true and what is not true, what has happened and what has no happened but we also talk about what may be true or not, what ought to be, what certain individual are capable of and what is impossible for them, what obligations we have to do or to refrain

from doing. All these notions together constitute modality.

Then, according to Huang (2001: 79) states that mood and modality are significant parts in the interpersonal function with the former expressing the speaker's purpose to be achieved with his speech and being a semantic system expressing the speaker's judgment or evaluation which covers the field between "yes" and "no". In addition Halliday (1994: 89) defines modality as the speaker's judgments of probabilities, or the obligation involved in what she/ he is saying.

In the framework of systemic functional linguistics, modality is important since modality pay significant attention to the utterances used to convey the desirability meanings by speakers, expressing their ideas, intentions, attitudes, and positions to their addressees.

As for the ordinary people in communications, the choice of different modality will give others different impression, which influences the chance of a successful communication. The orientation of modality is the way the speaker to express the modality. They can be subjective or objective and can be implicit or explicit.

Metaphors of modality diverge from the congruent pattern in that, here, a modal meaning is construed outside the proposition that is being modally assessed. It can be seen from what Halliday (1994) claims that modal meanings are most congruently expressed by modal elements in the clause, i.e. modal operators and adjuncts (certainly, probably and the like).

In communication especially in talk show, when the host or interviewee wants to convey

his/her attitude toward the proposition, he/she often make the source of “modal responsibility” explicitly subjective for instance, the forms such as I think and I suppose that can be employed metaphorically. These forms are metaphorical because a modality that would usually be realized either as a finite modal operator or as an adjunct (congruent realizations) in fact gets realized as a clause (Egins, 1994:181). It shows that metaphor of modality orientation is used to foreground speakers’ subjectivity get the successful communication.

A second general type of interpersonal grammatical metaphor as defined by Halliday pertains to the area of modality. When the speaker wants to modalize his or her messages, he or she can use modality system. Modality is an expression of possibility or necessity or anything in between. In English, modality can be expressed by auxiliaries such as can, will, must, may, should, would, could, and might. It refers to how speakers and writers take up a position, express an opinion, point of view or make a judgment.

In terms of functional linguistics, metaphor of modality imply that speakers do not use the modal constituent of a clause, such as modal adverb but rather a single compound sentence to express the modal meanings. The incongruent realization of the modal expression is metaphor of modality.

It can be revealed that English modality system has its own rules while complexity and uncertainty also exist in the expression of expression modality meanings, manifested in a variety of means for modalization and modulation. Clauses, nouns, nouns, verb phrase or even prepositional phrases can be employed to express modality. Modality orientation is related to the speaker’s modal responsibility, that is how much explicit responsibility the speaker takes for his attitudes (Thompson, 1996: 60).

Halliday (1994: 357) claims that it is modality orientation that determines how each modality meaning get expressed. The orientation is the distinction between subjective and objective modality, and between the explicit and implicit variants. Subjective implicit orientation and objective implicit orientation are congruent form of modality. Subjective explicit orientation and the objective explicit orientation are metaphor of modality.

A subjective modality is one where the personal opinion is expressed by the first person or by using impersonal it, projecting clause for example ‘I think’, ‘I guess’, etc. The objective modality is where the speaker does not take responsibility to the judgment by hiding his/her personal opinion for example ‘we think’, ‘it is expected’, ‘our expectation’, ‘in our opinion’, etc.

The relationship between different types of modality and orientation is shown in following table.

Table 1. The Orientation and Types of Modality

	Explicitly subjective metaphor of modality	Implicitly subjective non-metaphorical modality	Explicitly objective metaphor of modality	Implicitly objective non-metaphorical modality
Modalisation probability	I think Mary know	Mary will know	Mary probably knows	It is likely Mary Knows
Modalisation Frequency/usuality		Fred will sit quite quietly	Fred usually sits quite quietly	It is usual for Fred to sit quite quietly
Modulation Obligation	I want John to go	John should go	John is supposed to go	It is expected John to go
Modulation Inclination		Jane will help	Jane is keen to help	

Adopted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 620)

In public speeches, the purpose is to establish certain relationships between the speaker and the listener. Therefore, the interpersonal function seems particularly important. As a marked manifestation of modality, metaphor will create special interpersonal and discourse effects, hence helping the speaker to convey his ideas and communicate with his listener.

Feng (2011) stated in his journal that there are some of the functions of the metaphor of modality. They are:

a. To Emphasize Strong Belief

For example: *I believe*, as I always have, that we will rise to this moment, we will build something better for our children, and we will secure America’s future in this new century. (Obama’s weekly radio speech, Aug. 15, 2009)

b. To Show Uncertainty

For example:

1. *And I expect* there will be a lot of discussion about it when Congress returns. (Obama’s weekly radio speech, Aug. 22, 2009)
2. *I realize* that when we passed this Recovery Act, there were those who felt that doing nothing was somehow an answer. (Obama’s weekly radio speech, Jul. 11, 2009)
3. *I hope* that’s exactly what all of you do. But I also want to take a moment today to reflect on what I believe is the meaning of this distinctly American holiday. (Obama’s weekly radio speech, Jul. 4, 2009)

4. *I imagine* you'll be watching their progress closely. (Obama's weekly radio speech, Jun. 6, 2009)

c. To Create Objectivity

For example:

1. As we continue to recover from an historic economic crisis, *it is clear* to everyone that one of its major causes was a breakdown in oversight that led to widespread abuses in the financial system. (Obama's weekly radio speech, Jul. 18, 2009)
2. *It is true* that this crisis was caused in part by Americans who took on too much debt and took out loans they simply could not afford. (Obama's weekly radio speech, Jul. 18, 2009)
3. That's why fixing what's wrong with our health care system is no longer a luxury we hope to achieve—it's a *necessity* we cannot postpone any longer. (Obama's weekly radio speech, Jun. 6, 2009)
4. That's the kind of urgency and *determination* we need to achieve comprehensive reform by the end of this year. (Obama's weekly radio speech, May 16, 2009)
5. There is no longer a *doubt* that the jobs and industries of tomorrow will involve harnessing renewable sources of energy. (Obama's weekly radio speech, Mar. 21, 2009)

In addition, Jian Xu (2009) stated that subjectivity and objectivity of metaphor of modality play an important in coordinating role in the politeness degree of verbal communication.

The context of situation (register) also will be the discussion of this research, the metaphor of modality orientation. The context of situation as Halliday stated can be divided into 3 features. They are field, tenor and mood. As Halliday & Hassan (1985:12) state there are three keys dimension of the situation are identified as having significant and predictable impacts on language use. They are followed by field (topic or focus of the activity), tenor (role relations of power and solidarity), and mode (amount of feedback and role of language).

1. Field: component of experiential function refers to the subject matter and it may be similar to certain uses of the term domain in computational linguistics: what is happening, to whom, where and when, why it is happening, and so on.
2. Tenor: component of interpersonal function refers to the social relation existing between the interactants in a speech situation. It includes relations of formality, power, and affect (manager/ clerk, father/ son). Tenor influences interpersonal choices in the linguistic system, and thereby it affects role the structures and strategies chosen to activate the linguistic exchange.

3. Mode: component of textual function describes the way the language is being used in the speech interaction, including the medium (spoken, written, written to be spoken, etc) as well as the rhetorical mode (expository, instructive, persuasive, etc).

These three elements in a context of situation create possibility for the speaker/ writer to orient himself/herself in performing his/her speech. It is clear that tenor is about who is engaged in the interaction, and what their relationship is include social roles (distribution of speech functions, power relations), social proximity/distance (level of formality/personal involvement), and speaker persona (tone, modality, affect) in interaction. It briefly shows that tenor of a text tells you: what kind of the speaker is, or is presenting himself/herself to be, what kind of people the expected audience are, what the relationship between them is, or what relationship the speaker is presenting it as.

Related to the modality as an aggregate of various meanings relating to permission, ability, obligation, necessity, volition, and prediction, the tenor is reflected in context of situation in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale where the orientation of modality realized congruently and metaphorically by her to express her sadness to share from her heart, her audience, her gratitude with what she called, "a love letter to you".

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is conducted by applying a descriptive qualitative method in accordance with Bogdan & Biklen (1992:30) state that design used in research refers to the researcher's plan of how to proceed, and this research will be conducted by applying descriptive qualitative design, which has "natural setting as the direct source data".

The data of the research are the utterances of love letter that is read by the host in the show finale. Then, the utterances of love letter read by Oprah in the show finale are transcribed into written text. In this research, the researcher collects the data by using documentary technique, the recording of love letter reading which is got by downloading the transcript.

3. RESULT OF RESEARCH

There are four orientations of modality found in Oprah's love letter, they are subjective implicit, objective implicit, subjective explicit and objective explicit.

1) Subjective implicit

Oprah (U8) : "I always wanted to be a teacher and I ended up in the world's biggest classroom."

Oprah (U26) : "I would tell you that every single person you will ever meet shares that common desire."

Oprah (U27) : "Now I can't say I wasn't judging some days."

In data U8 above the host expresses her subjectivity of usuality to express high modalization. It is realized as subjective implicit since she expresses the speaker's modalization of usuality to show the frequency of her proposition in congruent form.

In data U26, host expresses the congruent form of modality subjectively by using "would". It shows that the speaker is sure about the proposition. This sentence is realized as congruent form of modality since it represents the speaker's judgment in the same clause by saying, "I would tell you that every single person you will ever meet shares that common desire."

In data U27, the host expresses her disability directly. It is realized as subjective implicit since she expresses her proposition of disability.

2) Objective Implicit

Oprah (U1) : "This show always allows people."

Oprah (U15) : "You will receive in direct proportion to how you give in."

In U1, the speaker expresses her objectivity of modalization. She uses "will" to express her certainty of something. It is realized as objective implicit since it represents the speaker's certainty of proposition in a clause by saying "This show always allows people."

In U15, the speaker shows her objectivity to express the possibility of something by saying "You will receive in direct proportion to how you give in". The speaker hides her subjectivity to the judgment by saying it objectively.

3) Subjective Explicit

Oprah (U5) : "I didn't have a vision or a lot of great expectations."

Oprah (U11): "and hope that you will take from this show."

In U5, she uses her subjectivity to the proposition. She uses explicit judgment to express the modalization by using "I don't have a vision". This is realized as the metaphorical form of modality since the speaker use projecting clause to say her judgment about the proposition.

In U11, the host express her low explicit proposition by saying "I hope" which realized as the metaphorical form of modality.

4) Objective Explicit

The objective explicit orientation can be shown in data from U2 and U23 below.

Oprah (U2) : "hopefully, to understand the power they have to change their own lives.

Oprah (U23) : "We don't feel inherently good enough or smart enough or pretty enough or worthy enough."

In U2, it is realized as the metaphor of modality since the speaker uses the speaker uses objective explicit to express her objectivity to the proposition in separate clause by saying "hopefully". This is realized as metaphor of

modality since the speaker avoids her subjectivity in making the expectation not by using pronoun 'I'.

In U3, the host uses low objective explicit to express her judgment to the proposition in separate clause by saying "we don't feel". This is realized as metaphor of modality since the speaker avoids her subjectivity in making the judgment by using pronoun 'we' to express her feeling.

Table .1. Percentages of Modality Orientation in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale

NO	CONGRUENT		METAPHOR	
	SUB. IMPLICIT	OB. IMPLICIT	SUB. EXPLICIT	OB. EXPLICIT
DI	30.4%	28.2%	26.0%	15.2%
Total	100 %			

From the result of the research, Oprah as the host of this talk show in show finale use projecting clause to express the metaphor of modality by the example, 'I thought, I felt, I hope, I imagine, we think, we hope, we felt, etc. In these expressions she uses metaphor of modality to foreground her subjectivity and more likely engage the judgment personally, take the responsibility to the judgment with high and low certainty meanwhile the objectivity shows they do not take responsibility to the proposition.

The dominant implicit orientation found is subjective implicit. The subjective implicit is the congruent form of modality, in this case the modality is expressed directly. The host used subjective implicit and objective implicit dominantly than another orientation. She gives the flavor or seasoning to the talk show to be interesting and credible. She as the host is subjective and objective in saying her judgment or opinion, she is subjective, strongly believes her thoughts or views. Then, she does not hide herself to the judgment by being objective to get what she wants. And she tends to use the congruent modality to make the listeners are easier to catch the message on what she is saying, as Wang (2010: 261) found that Obama made his audiences easier to understand and accept his political speeches by means of modal verbs (future tense), he laid out his following reforms and steps taken in his term. In this way, the government's objectives are shown at the same time; the audience's confidence is build.

As Jiezhen Dong (2013) says that in the courtroom, being objective and certain means being more powerful in the linguistic position and more persuasive for the jury. So this statement can support this research that the choice of the objective implicit orientation can make the speaker more powerful and more persuasive for the audiences.

The dominant explicit orientation or metaphorical form of modality is subjective explicit. That means the speaker speak subjectively and politely with great certain and personal engagement. She emphasizes the main ideas of her

own opinion to convince the listeners and make them understand her thoughts. She expresses the judgment metaphorically to convey the messages indirectly. It means that metaphor of modality help her to convey their messages through the love letter as the finale of this very popular show.

The ways of Oprah expresses the metaphor of modality orientation is by using projecting clause. The host expresses the judgment not only by using modals congruently but by projecting the modals into clause. From the utterances shown above, such clauses generally express a decorative relational process and therefore the speaker's opinions will be lighted and her relevant responsibility will be avoided.

4. CONCLUSION

From the discussions, it can be drawn the conclusion as follows: (1) The modality orientation used in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale are subjective implicit, objective implicit, subjective explicit, and objective explicit, (2) The ways of metaphor of modality orientation in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale is by using projecting clause, (3) The function of modality orientation in Oprah Winfrey Show Finale is to emphasize strong belief and create objectivity.

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