

## LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS USED BY THE MAIN CHARACTER IN “12 YEARS A SLAVE” MOVIE TRANSCRIPT

Risnu Freli Yulistiono

*IAIN Tulungagung, East Java*

**Abstract:** Language is an instrument of communication. Language carries functions through which the intention of communication can be revealed. This study investigates language functions used by the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Steve Mc Queen. The objectives of the study was to find out the types of language functions used by main character in the movie and to describe the most dominant types of language functions found based on Roman Jakobson’s theory. The research design of this research was descriptive method with qualitative approach. The result showed that Solomon Northup as the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Steve Mc Queen used all types of the language functions in the movie. They are; 43 emotive, 17 directive, 8 phatic, 4 poetic, 117 referential and 10 metalinguistic function. Referential function becomes the dominant types of language function used by the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Steve Mc Queen. Referential function is used dominantly by Solomon Northup as the main character, because as a slave, he tried to reveal the truth by correlating every piece of evidence and giving information about his life that he was a free man not a slave that run away from other country.

**Keywords:** Language Functions, Main Character, Movie Transcript.

Language is the system of human communication which consists of the structured arrangement of sounds (or their written representation) into larger units. Language is one important thing for human. By receiving and sending language, people can fulfill their need to survive. Language is primarily spoken, although it can be transferred to another way, such as written. It also makes people easier to exchange information and to express our ideas and feelings. Using language we can understand the meaning and purposes of others speak or talk when we listen carefully to what is said.

In doing communication, people may not realize that spoken or written sentences also carry a function. However, the hearer may get confused if people speak without a purpose. It means that the language function leads the hearers to achieve the purpose of someone’s speech. Language itself consists of some functions which are to give information, deliver message, express feelings, persuade people, entertain people, and share opinion. According to Roman

Jakobson in Cook (1989:26), language functions include expressive, directive, phatic, poetic, referential, and metalinguistic function.

Language functions are important for our communication. When we communicate with other people usually we don't understand what they mean. Understanding language functions can make our mind easily in analyzing every sentence what the speaker said when we communicate. It also will help us explain how stretches of language. Language functions can also be seen in many place, we can found in the literature.

Language function can also be seen in literacy work works, such as movie or cinema film. In this case film is included in drama. According to Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary (2008), film is a series of moving pictures, usually shown in a cinema or on television and often telling a story. Using movie we can learning about language are used. In the teaching and learning language, it can be used to teaching and learning language media. Study about language use a media is easier.

On the basis of the importance of language functions, the writer would like to study it in a movie. The researcher will analyze language functions used by the main character in "12 Years a Slave" movie. The writer chooses the film to be observed because it is directed by Stave Mc Queen from England it is the first film directed by negro people who won the highest award of the film industry. This film is the best film and the winner of best film categories in the 86th Academy Awards ceremony, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) and took place March 2, 2014, at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles. Based on the description above, the researcher studies about language function used in the main character in "12 Years a Slave" movie transcript.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses qualitative approach because this study focuses on the analysis or interpretation of the written material in context. Materials can include textbooks, newspapers, magazines, papers, films, manuscripts, articles, and the like. The material of this study focuses on film or movie. According to Ary (2010:424) the qualitative inquirer deals with data that are in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers and statistics. Data in the form of quotes from documents, field notes, and interviews or excerpts from videotapes, audiotapes, or electronic communications are used to present the findings of the study.

The writer uses design of descriptive method because the writer studies about text language functions used by the main character in "12 Years a Slave" movie transcript. The descriptive method is implemented because the data analysis is presented descriptively. The writer use some books and many other sources as references that related to the subject matter that is being analyzed.

The data of this study are the sentences or utterances produced by the main character containing with language functions. This research uses movie transcript used by the main character in "12 Years a Slave" movie transcript. All of data source taken from the main character's utterance from this movie. The primary source of the data is the text or utterances itself.

In this study the data are collected by documentation. The procedures of this study consisted of; firstly writing down the movie transcript. Then taking notes on the main character's utterances from beginning until end. Next finding out all of the utterances of the main character, sentences which contain with language function as a data and describing the contextual meaning.

## FINDINGS

After the researcher collects the data, he analyzed the data of transcript used by the main character in "12 Years a Slave" movie transcript by Stave Mc Queen on the language function based on Roman Jakobson's theory.

The researcher has written the main character utterances around 199 utterances. The types of language functions that found in one-hundred-ninety nine utterances used by the main character, they are: emotive, directive, phatic, poetic, referential, and metalinguistic function. In calculating; 43 emotive, 17 directive, 8 phatic, 4 poetic, 117 referential and 10 metalinguistic.

Solomon Northup as the main character in "12 Years a Slave" movie transcript by Stave Mc Queen used all types of the language function in the movie. They are expressive, directive, phatic, poetic, referential, and metalinguistic function. Some analysis types of language functions used by the main character in "12 Years a Slave" movie transcript by Stave Mc Queen are presented as follow.

### Emotive Function

Emotive function means express the speaker's feeling. This function is oriented toward the addresser. It is designed to stress the addresser's response to a given situation arising in the context.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Mr. Brown	It's been a most profitable week, sir. Cheers!
2	Mr. Hamilton	Cheers!
3	Solomon	<b><i>Cheers!</i></b>

Solomon Northup as the speaker tried to convey his emotion to the addressee by saying "***Cheers!*** [line 3]", so he maximized his volume which included in the characteristics of emotive function.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Torturer	Resolve this. Produce your papers. You're no free
2		man and you are not from Saratoga. You're from
3		Georgia. You're not free man. You're nothing but a
4		Georgia runaway. You just a runaway nigger from
		Georgia.
5	<i>Solomon</i>	<b><i>Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh!</i></b>
6	Torturer	You're a slave! You're a Georgia slave!
7	Solomon	<b><i>Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh!</i></b>
8	Torturer	Are you a slave?
9	Solomon	<b><i>No!</i></b>

10	<i>Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh!</i>
11	<i>Help! Help me! Help me! Somebody help me!</i>
12	<i>Help! Help!</i>

Solomon Northup as the speaker in datum tried to show his feeling which he getting a torture from the torturer. The speaker used exclamation word by saying “*Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh! Argh!*” [line 5, 7, 10], he showed what he feeling. So he maximized his volume which being in the characteristics of expressive function.

In the utterance [line 9], the speaker used another exclamation word “*No!*” to emphasize the content of the message to addressee. He disagrees with the addressee’s statement so maximize volume. That is way this function being categorized into expressive function. From the utterance [line 11], Solomon Northup as the speaker tried to appear his feel. He used exclamation word “*Help! Help me! Help me! Somebody help me! Help! Help!*”, he expresses what he feeling by maximize volume. That it has function being categorized expressive function.

### Directive Function

Directive function means attempt to get someone to do something. It is oriented toward the addressee.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Solomon	<i>All right, all right, all right, all right.</i>
2		<i>Into bed, into bed thank you for the music</i>
3		<i>Come on. Get in there. Come on.</i>
4		<i>Give me kiss.</i>
5		<i>I love you, Margaret.</i>
6	Margaret	<i>I love you too</i>
7	Solomon	<i>Sleep well</i>
8		<i>I'll take this</i>
9		<i>I don't want to hear any more noise.</i>

The utterance [lines 2 and 3] that the speaker give direction or command to addressee which the addressee have to follow his command, the speaker give command to the addressee for doing something soon. In utterance [line 4] the speaker uses another command if he wants something have to be done by the addressee.

In the next utterance [line 9] the speaker also uses directive function to attempt the addressee to hear his command and to follow it. The speaker that Solomon Northup as the speaker used directive function to attempt the addressee to follow his command. He said so because he needed the particular reaction as it was oriented toward the addressee.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Solomon	<i>Be good for your mother. Okay, Alonzo?</i>
2		<i>Can I get a kiss please? Thank you.</i>

3		<i>Travel safely.</i>
4	Mrs. Solomon	Stay safely. Ready?

The utterance **[line 1]** that the speaker gives command to the addressee for following his command that to be good for his mother. Then, in utterance **[line 2]** the speaker tries to give command to the addressee for doing something, the speaker want a kiss from her son by saying “*Can I get a kiss please? Thank you*”. The utterance **[line 3]** contains directive function because the speaker gives command to the addressee if she has to stay safely.

### Phatic Function

Phatic function serves to establish communication. It focuses on maintaining contact.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Mr. Moon	Mr. Northup. These two gentlemen were inquiring about distinguished individuals and I was just this very moment saying Solomon Northup is an expert player on the violin.
2		
3		
4		
5	Mr. Brown	He was indeed
6	Solomon	<i>Mr. Moon is being overly gracious.</i>
7	Mr. Brown	Well, taking into consideration his graciousness and your modesty may we trouble you for a moment of your time to converse, sir?
8		
9		

The utterances **[line 6]**, it can be known that phatic function is used by Solomon Northup as the speaker in datum. He intended to get contact with the addressee and open the channel of communication. The speaker’s purpose in the function firstly is to maintain the contact with the person he was talking to.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Mrs. Solomon	We will take it? Children, come see what you father has just purchased for me.
2		
3	Mr. Parker	One moment, sir and you’ll be assisted
4	Solomon	<i>Mr. Parker, sir? If we discuss the price.</i>
5	Mr. Parker	Oh, forgive me, Solomon. Forgive me, Mrs. Northup.
6		A customer waits. Welcome sir.

Solomon Northup as the speaker in datum tries to establish a communication with the addressee by calling his name. The speaker tries to convey the addressee by saying “*Mr. Parker, sir? If we discuss the price.*” **[line 4]**.

### Poetic Function

It focuses on aesthetic features of language as poem, e.g. an ear-catching motto, and rhyme.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Mr. Brown	It’s been a most profitable week, sir. Cheers!
2	Mr. Hamilton	Cheers!

3	Solomon	Cheers!
4	Mr. Brown	Another.
5	Solomon	<b><i>Gentlemen, your generosity is extraordinary.</i></b>
6	Mr. Brown	And your talents are undeniable.

Solomon Northup as the speaker used poetic function in his sentence. It can be known by the use of aesthetic feature sentence. The speaker uses these utterances for showing admiration with the addressee by saying “*Gentlemen, your generosity is extraordinary*”. [line 5]

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Slave Spiritual Singer	Went down to the River Jordan, where
2		John baptized three, when I woke the devil
3		in hell said Johnny baptized me. I said roll,
4		Jordan roll. Roll Jordan roll, Roll Jordan
5		roll, My soul rise in heaven, Lord for the
6		year when Jordan roll. Well some say John
7		was a Baptist, some say John was a Jew
8		but I say John was a preacher ‘cause my
9		bible says so too. I said roll, Jordan roll.
10		Roll Jordan roll, Roll Jordan roll, My soul
11		rise in heaven, Lord for the year when
12		Jordan roll.
13		Hallelujah
14	Solomon	Roll Jordan roll, Roll Jordan roll, My soul
15		rise in heaven, Lord for the year when
16		Jordan roll.
17		<b><i>My soul rise in heaven, Lord for the</i></b>
18		<b><i>year when Jordan roll.</i></b>
19		<b><i>Roll Jordan roll, Roll Jordan roll, My</i></b>
20		<b><i>soul rise in heaven, Lord for the year</i></b>
21		<b><i>when Jordan roll.</i></b>
22		<b><i>Roll Jordan roll, Roll Jordan roll, My</i></b>
23		<b><i>soul rise in heaven, Lord for the year</i></b>
		<b><i>when Jordan roll.</i></b>

Solomon Northup as the speaker used poetic function in his sentence. It can be known by the use of repeat its sentences. The speaker uses these utterances for praying to his God. By saying “*Roll Jordan roll, Roll Jordan roll. My soul rise in heaven, Lord for the year when Jordan roll*” [Line 14-23] some times, the speaker prays for his friend that was dead.

### Referential Function

Referential function means provide or convey information. This function is oriented toward the context.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Torturer	Well boy, how do you feel now?
2	Solomon	<i>My name, my name is Solomon Northup.</i>
3		<i>I'm a free man. A resident of Saratoga,</i>
4		<i>New York. The residence of my wife and</i>
5		<i>children who are equally free. And you</i>
6		<i>have no right whatsoever to detain me.</i>
7	Torturer	You're not any free man.

Solomon Northup as the speaker conveys the addressee about the truth about himself. The speaker gives information to the addressee that he is a free man not a nigger by saying “*My name, my name is Solomon Northup. I'm a free man, a resident of Saratoga, New York, the residence of my wife and children who are equally free. And you have no right whatsoever to detain me*” [lines 2-6], the speaker tries to convey the addressee. It is included in the referential function.

Lines	Characters	Utterances
1	Nigger	I say we fight.
2	Solomon	<i>The crew is fairly small. Were it well planned, I</i>
3		<i>believe they could be strong-armed.</i>
4	Clemens	Three can't go against the whole crew. The rest here
5		are niggers. Born and bred slaves. Niggers are not
6		got no stomach for a fight. Not a damn one.
7	Nigger	All's I know, if we get where we're traveling, we'll
8		wish we'd dead trying.

In the datum in [lines 2-3], Solomon Northup as the speaker gives information to the addressee that he carries information about his condition in order to survive. The speaker tries to convey the addressee by giving information.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher use Roman Jakobson's theory to finds out the types of language functions that used by the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Stave Mc Queen. They are expressive, directive, phatic, poetic, referential, and metalinguistic function.

Based on the findings, the writer found six types of language functions used by the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Stave Mc Queen. There are 199 utterances as data. The researcher found all of language functions Roman Jakobson's theory, in calculating; 43 emotive, 17 directive, 8 phatic, 4 poetic, 117 referential and 10 metalinguistic. This finding is suitable with the theory of language functions from Roman Jakobson.

The most dominant of language functions found that used by the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Steve Mc Queen is needed in this study. The most dominant in research aim is to facilitate a person if they want know the main character condition. The most dominant of language functions that used by the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Steve Mc Queen is Referential functions. Referential function becomes the dominant types of language function used by the main character in “12 Years a Slave” movie transcript by Steve Mc Queen. Referential function is used dominantly by Solomon Northup, it’s mean that as the main character mostly establishing conveying and giving information in order to convey someone, because as a nigger, he tried to reveal the truth by correlating every piece of evidence and giving information about his life that he was a free man not a nigger that run away from other country.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

After analyzing language functions we can learn the definition of language functions itself and also know the types of language functions. Understanding language functions can help us to analyze every utterances has been spoken by everyone and knowing what the function of the utterances. Learning language functions we can know about the condition and feeling from speaker’s utterances. It’s also can give imagine of the speaker condition and also we can guess the background of the speaker.

Based on the above conclusion, it is suggested that for the other researchers who are interested in studying language, not only spoken utterances in movie but also they can use other media such as newspaper, radio and analyze spoken program on television can also be the object of other language analysis such as language functions. Based on this study, the researcher hopes to the readers and the other researcher that this study will be useful for future improvement of language study basically language functions used by the main character in a movie,

### **REFERENCE**

- Cook, Guy. 1989. *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Donald, Ary., et al. 2010. *Introduction to Research in Education 8<sup>th</sup> Edition*.  
Canada: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Walter, Elizabeth. 2008. *Cambridge Advance Learner’s Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.