Joe Biden's Confidence in Addressing World Security Issue: An Interpersonal Analysis of Political Discourse

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Abstract—**This study aimed to discover President Joe Biden's confidence level and the realization of probability in his speech. A qualitative content analysis approach was conducted in this research. The data of this research were the speeches of Joe Biden on several occasions accessed from YouTube. Furthermore, the data were transcribed and then analyzed using probability theory. Therefore, the analysis result indicated that Joe Biden has high confidence. This result can be observed through his speech that he tends to use a high degree of probability in stating his plans, promises, and predictions of the policies he will implement. The probabilities used by Joe Biden also tend to vary in forms such as modal verbs, modal verb phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and nouns.**

Index Terms—**appraisal, probability, political discourse**

I. INTRODUCTION

It is known that the beginning of Joe Biden's leadership began with many obstacles, such as the attack on the Capitol Hill building by the masses of supporters of Donald Trump and the COVID-19 pandemic, which still haunts the world community, including the United States of America. Then, on the 100th day as the President of the United States of America, Joe Biden delivered his speech in front of Congress, house representatives, and the American Senate. In such a precarious situation, he is still confident enough to show off his accomplishments, such as successfully combating the COVID-19 pandemic by providing US citizens with 100 million vaccine doses. He also stated that it would grow to 220 million doses in a hundred days. Even Joe Biden tries to reassure us that America will recover from the previous crisis, including the worst pandemic, economy, and attack on American democracy. Whether it will be accomplished in a hundred days or not or whether America will rise, what matters most should be focused on in this study is Joe Biden's confidence in expressing such a thing. This has made Joe Biden a public figure who draws the attention of many Americans and even the world community. Thus, every word, utterance, and speech of Joe Biden, either in conveying his ideas as president or in uniting his people for a specific purpose, will be the thing that the public is waiting for and paying attention to.

Language possesses an important role, especially in political speech. Since language is both a medium for conveying meaning to the audience and a source of meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), it is no doubt that politicians should be able to organize their intention through language. Therefore, giving a speech like what Joe Biden has done is more than conveying words or language in such activities or special occasions. Moreover, in a political context, a leader or public figure should be careful to use language representing their identity in the middle of social diversity background. Considering the audience's ethnicity or social background is essential since these factors may arouse political conflict (Humaizi et al., 2019).

Speech is also an expression of thoughts or discourse prepared to be conveyed to the public (Stalnaker, 1999). That was why speech could not be separated from language in context because speech also has its context. It is a matter of the text as language functioning in context (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). So then, political context shapes the speaker's meaning in political speech. So, at that point, the language function in speech is presented

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as an interpersonal function. In Joe Biden's speech, he also considers his intended audience or for whom he delivers the speech. Therefore, language is used in Joe Biden's speech as an interpersonal function. It can be noticed that he also tries to assure his citizens that he will arouse America together with his utterance, which is one of the realizations of interpersonal function.

> *... I can report to the nation. America is on the move again. Turning peril into possibility, crisis into opportunity, setbacks to strength…. We all know life can knock us down. However, in America, we never, ever, ever stay down…. Americans always get up…. We have shown each other and the world that there is no quit in America. None.*

Joe Biden's interpersonal function utterance above sought to influence audience behavior through his words. That was, as president and public figure, Joe Biden acted through language to gain the trust of his citizens. Regardless of whether the audience truly believed or was interested in Joe Biden's statement, it was essential to realize that in speech, language was no longer just conveying meaning but had entered the realm of influencing others' thoughts or actions. This refers more to the function of the language used by Joe Biden in his speech and how the discourse he used represented his thoughts to provoke American society. Therefore, the concept of probability, which was part of the modalization in the study of systemic functional linguistics, appeared as an appropriate approach to analyze such utterances.

Probability was using modality to indicate confidence in a statement or utterance. Halliday (Eggins, 2004) explained that probability was an expression of the speaker's judgment on the likelihood that something would happen. Joe Biden's statements also contain probability, which shows the level of his confidence in his statements as an effort to attract the trust of the community. For instance, his utterance "can" in "… I can report to the nation, America is on the move again" reflected the medium probability level.

Probability is one of the interesting subjects to be investigated, especially in the use of language uttered by public figures such as Joe Biden. Probability is a means of indicating or measuring how confident the speaker is in his speech. This is closely related to the concept that we live in discourse. That is, we can find out how confident Joe Biden is through Joe Biden's utterances. The speaker's level of strength of any information or statement can be observed through probability. Therefore, researchers investigated how confident Joe Biden is and how the probability is realized in his speech.

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is limited in its use of probability in the selected speech of President Joe Biden. Researchers use probability theory based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), which explains three probability levels: low, medium, and high.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Systemic Functional Linguistic

Systemic functional linguistics is a linguistics approach developed by M. A. K. Halliday in the 1960s that deems a language as a social semiotics system rather than just a rule, as in Chomsky's theory. Linguistics is concerned with the study of language, and it is closely related to the concept of grammar since grammar is related to how language is organized (Butt, 2019). So then, departing from the notion that each grammar structure involves a choice from a set of explainable options, Halliday argues that grammar is a system rather than a rule (Li, 2019). Therefore, systemic functional linguistics (SFL) focuses not only on grammar but also on the study of language as a resource to create, explore and understand the meaning in discourse (Halliday, 1985, 1994; Martin & Rose, 2007; Matthiessen, 1995). SFL is a practical approach for elucidating and modeling language as a meaning-making resource and choice (Darani, 2014).

B. Text and Context

In SFL, the text takes the place of the linguistic units. Linguistic units generally refer to any units or pieces of linguistic forms, such as sound, morpheme, word, phrase, clause, and sentence. However, here, the interpretation of the text as a linguistics unit is further clarified. That text was not merely something like a piece. The text should also include semantic units instead of grammatical parts such as words, phrases, or sentences. It should be noted that text as a semantic unit is expressed or realized by sound, word, phrase, and sentence, which means that text is a meaning expressed by any linguistic form. Therefore, other things, such as gestures, symbols, or semiotic units, are also called text. The critical point is that it should be considered a text as long as it has meaning.

There are several types of English text based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2014): exploring text (spoken, monologic), which is more complex and written to be spoken on critical public occasions; recommending text (written, monologic), which is a written text that we could read aloud; and sharing text (spoken, dialogic), which is a spoken text that could be turned into the written text because it has been recorded, rather than the word or the sentence (Reiss, 1981). It could be a sound (verbal), word, clause, sentence, paragraph, or even a semiotic unit such as a symbol, as long as it has meaning.

In addition, Butt (2019) stated that text is a harmonious collection of meanings appropriate to its context. In other words, text and context are interrelated. Context refers to the environment of the text. Reiss (1981) argues that text is the translation unit, so context is significant to realize the proper meaning. Furthermore, Malinowski explains that extending the concept of context is very useful in reaching spoken words and in the form of facial expressions, gestures, and body activities (Senft, 2007). That is why Malinowski's claim that language or language use should be studied in this context.

There are three strata of context (Bakuuro, 2017): the context of culture, the context of a situation, and co-text. The context of culture refers to a goal-oriented genre and purposeful social activities (Martin, 2009). The context of a situation is also called a register, and it has three elements: field, which refers to what is going on; tenor, which takes part in communication; and mode, which indicates how the communication takes place (Eggins, 2004a). Co-text is the linguistic context that is the environment inside the text. Rather than co-text, the cultural and situational context is outside the linguistic area.

C. Interpersonal Meaning

Meaning plays a vital role in the purpose of language as a communication or interaction tool. Therefore, SFL presents the three kinds of meaning that are generally called the three meta-functions of language: ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Language as an interpersonal function is related to meaning as a form of action. This deals with how people act towards each other through language, such as giving and asking for information, offering something, expressing doubts, and asking questions (Rose, 2008). The message's meaning depends on its purpose of function, whether primarily informative (referential), expressive, or operative (Reiss, 1981). As a result, the speech's interpersonal meaning is realized because it serves a purpose, whether to attract people or influence their thoughts.

D. Modality

Regarding the meta-functions of language, modality is essential in carrying out the interpersonal function. It is confirmed that modality exhibits the degree of the proposition (Yu & Wu, 2016). Modality also refers to the speaker's judgment, or request of the listener's judgment, on the status of what is being said. Modalization is one-half of the general grammar area of English grammar, where people can interpret messages and express attitudes and various perceptions (Eggins, 2004b). It refers to how the speakers try to mute or expand their meaning (Martin & White, 2007).

Modality could be used through the mood element, finite element, or a separate mood adjunct (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Thompson (2013) stated that modality was divided into modalization and modulation based on its realization. Modalization was discerned by modal verbs that were used for prediction or likelihood of something. The proposition's validity was compromised if a modal verb was used to represent the modality. Furthermore, modulation was realized by the mood adjunct. It is the general term for all signs of speakers' opinions and attitudes (Ye, 2010).

E. Probability

When interacting with or conveying ideas, there are times when the speaker needs clarification about the certainty of the message or meaning he meant. Thus, to represent this doubt, the concept of probability as one part of modality is presented (Martin, 1995). Probability is part of modalization observed in the phenomenon where the speaker expresses judgment as the likelihood or probability of something happening or will happen., such an utterance contains a prediction or judgment, either spoken or written (Halliday et al., 2004).

Afterward, probability also is the epistemic modality in philosophical semantics (Dalamu, 2019). It indicates the speaker's doubt or uncertainty in conveying a message or meaning. This is because probability has a level or degree that explains the speaker's speech position between 'yes and no'. However, what is a 'yes'? What is a 'no'? Besides, what lies between 'yes and no'? and how the speaker represents his position on an utterance with this concept? This can be answered by looking at the probability level formulated by Halliday (1985).

TABLE 1
THE DEGREE OF PROBABILITY (HALLIDAY, 1985)

Realization	Degree of Probability		
	High	Medium	Low
	Must be, should be, must, possible, certainly	Probably, Possible	Maybe, possibly, may

Through the degree of probability, the speaker can choose any words or meaning to realize the substantial certainty of their message. Otherwise, by noticing the probability of the speaker, we can conclude how much certainty the word has by looking at how close the probability is to the word "yes" and how close it is to the word "no." So, after all, we could see how the speaker's confidence is by measuring how high the "yes" and how low the "no" of the utterances is.

F. Speech

A speaker can deliver a message in many ways —written, spoken, or show gestures. Speech emerged as one of these ways in which the speaker expresses his message verbally (McLeod & McCormack, 2015). Speech is often associated with the term "public speaking" because it also involves speaking in public to inform, persuade, and entertain the

audience (Amalia et al., 2018). A similar opinion also explains that there are three types of speech (O'Hair et al., 2007): informative speech, which constitutes neutral speech because the speaker does not involve his opinion because he conveys information and allows the audience to speculate on the information; persuasive speech, in which the speaker tries to influence the audience's thinking on something, invites them to take action, or lures them to believe the speaker's thought or something; memorable occasion speech, which is usually used at certain events such as official state speeches, holiday celebrations, and ceremonies; and inspirational speech where the speaker relies more on emotions and connects with the audience to raise awareness of something like how the situation has changed or why their current emotions, fears, or goals may be inadequate or counterproductive.

Even though the three speeches look different, it is possible that all three types can be used simultaneously. For example, in a political speech, in addition to inviting the audience to elect the speaker, factual information can be inserted where the audience is free to speculate (Amin et al., 2022). It is the matter of the meaning. The meaning the politician realizes in his speech is crucial since it enacts the social function. Thus, the idea that the politician lied in his speech can make speculation for the audience.

IV. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used the descriptive qualitative content analysis method, where the researcher was the research instrument. The qualitative method generated a clear and rich detailed record of human experience because this method was done by observing intense contact with participants under unexpected circumstances (Miles et al., 2014). Therefore, here the researcher conducted content analysis to analyze the probability in the several speeches of President Joe Biden.

TABLE 2
THE SOURCE OF THE DATA

No	Title	Code
1	Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan	S1
2	Biden's Speech to Congress	S2
3	Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to The Ukrainian Rada	S3
4	The President's Remarks as Prepared by The White House And Delivered From The Treaty Room	S4
5	President Biden's Address to the Nation	S5
6	Joe Biden's inauguration speech	S6
7	Joe Biden's victory speech Saturday night in Wilmington.	S7

There are seven speeches taken as the data of this research. The data was taken from YouTube and then transcribed into text transcription. After that, the researcher analyzed each clause using probability theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Then, the researcher labeled the utterances classified as probability. The labeled data are distributed in a table for making the probability categorization. In the final step, the researcher summarized the data and concluded.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Probability Category

After analyzing the speech of Joe Biden, the researcher found that 118 utterances contained a probability of being delivered by Joe Biden. 6 categories of linguistic form express the probability as in the table below:

TABLE 3
PROBABILITY CATEGORY IN JOE BIDEN SPEECH

No	Probability Category	Occurrences	Percentage
1	Modal Verb (MV)	97	82%
2	Adverb (Adv)	5	4%
3	Adjective (Adj)	4	3%
4	Noun (N)	4	3%
6	Modal Predicator (MP)	8	7%
	Total	118	100%

Those linguistic forms were categorized as probability since they expressed Joe Biden's judgment or prediction about his statement. Then, based on the finding in Table 3, 6 types of linguistic forms are used to express probability in Joe Biden's speech. The negative form of probability is already present in these probability data. Those modals express the probability of the idea or statement being delivered by Joe Biden. From the 118 occurrences, the most common probability used by Joe Biden in showing the probability is the MV, which consists of 97 occurrences, 82% of the whole, followed by the MP, which has eight occurrences, or 7% of the total probabilities. While the probability categories he used are Adj, N, and Adv, which account for less than 5% of total occurrences. Here we provide an example taken from Joe Biden's speech:

(a). Probability by Using MV

MV is the most lucid probability example found in Joe Biden's speech. For instance,
*"We **will** hunt you down to the ends of the Earth, and you **will** pay the ultimate price".*
(Source: Speech 1)

Joe Biden conveyed the above utterance in his speech about the end of the Afghanistan war on August 31, 2021. There we noticed the bold words which indicate MV. In his utterance, two occurrences of MV are classified as a probability. The first MV in the clause, "We **will** hunt you ...." represents Joe Biden's intention toward someone or perhaps everyone who threatens the United States. Through the word "will," we can know that Joe Biden intends to " hunt" anyone if they threaten the United States. Joe Biden's intention certainly has not happened because the "will" MV indicates a plan he might make. That is a probability where Joe Biden convinces his audience by showing his intention to "hunt down" anyone who threatens his country.

(b). Probability by Using Adverb

Joe Biden uses very few probabilities in the form of Adv. Although the number is small, the Adv can also be a type of probability concrete enough to represent the speaker's confidence level. Example,
*"As commander-in-chief, I **firmly** believe the best path to guard our safety and security lies in the tough, unforgiving, targeted, precise strategy that goes after terror where it is today, not where it was two decades ago."*
(Source: Speech 1)

No doubt, Joe Biden believed in the best path to guard the United States' safety. He firmly said "firmly believe" and not "may believe" or "will believe," which seem dubious or elucidate an unstable sense of trust. This matter may seem trivial, like it is just a word choice problem, but precisely, this choice represents the speaker's level of confidence and an effort to convince the audience. Through the Adv "firmly," Joe Biden deliberately displayed his conviction that his idea "tough, unforgiving, targeted, precise strategy" could keep the United States safe.

(c). Probability by Using Adjective

Just like Adv, the probability of using Adj is also relatively small. This type of probability is characterized by using an adjective that makes the Joe Biden clause protrude into the space where something is likely to happen. The following is an example of a clause taken from Joe Biden's speech regarding the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States,
*"It's time for boldness for there is so much to do. And this is **certain**, I promise you".*
(Source: Speech 6)

Joe Biden conveyed the above clause after mentioning the many challenges in the United States. As president, he tries to attract people to face these challenges. It is manifested in the first clause, "It's time for boldness...". Then he again reassured his people that they (including him as the president) would carry out the courage. Joe Biden realizes that belief using probability Adj in the following clause "And this is **certain**...". The word "certain" is what makes the position of the possibility of the "baldness" act that Joe Biden refers to at the "certain" point, not "impossible" or "possible."

(d). Probability by Using Noun

The probability category N also tends to be below. However, this type of probability is more complicated and requires precision in analyzing it. In contrast to MV, which tends to be easier to recognize. Here is an example of the probability N found in Joe Biden's speech,
*"I've always believed we can define America in one word: **Possibilities**. That in America, everyone should be given the opportunity to go as far as their dreams and God-given ability will take them".*
(Source: Speech 7)

The word in bold in the above statement, "possibilities," is a noun that indicates probability. Joe Biden uses this probability N to guess a possibility in his following clause, "... in America, everyone should be allowed to go as far as their dreams...". With his probability N, Joe Biden thought "there is a possibility" that everyone in America should have the opportunity to pursue their dreams. It means that here Joe Biden is neither so sure nor fully guaranteed that it exists.

(e). Probability by Using MP

MP is semi-modal but with an auxiliary verb and a preposition. Only 7% of MP probabilities are found in Joe Biden's speech. Even so, MP is the second most frequent type of probability found.
*I think you **should be able to** become a billionaire or a millionaire.*
(Source: Speech 2)

In the Joe Biden clause above, we can see the probability, consisting of a combination of modal "should" with an auxiliary followed by verbs and prepositions. With that probability, Joe Biden expressed his belief that they (the audience) could become billionaires or billionaires. However, Joe Biden's beliefs about what his audience will be like or what his audience will be are not fixed and are still classified as unrealized predictions. That is why the clause is classified as a clause containing probability.

B. Probability Level

People who seem doubtful about a possibility present a different probability than more confident people. The distinction is in terms of levels (Halliday, 1985) described: low, medium, and high probability. Therefore, the researcher has classified Joe Biden's utterances according to their probability level in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4
THE PROBABILITY LEVEL IN JOE BIDEN'S SPEECH

No	Probability	Occurrences	Percentage
1	L	23	19%
2	M	47	40%
3	H	48	41%
Total		118	100%

Note:　L = Low
　　　　M = Medium
　　　　H = High

There are three levels of probability found in Joe Biden's speech. As is seen in Table 4, high-level dominated the use of probability in Joe Biden's speech by 48 occurrences or 41% of the total occurrences. Then the second dominant probability level used by Joe Biden is the medium probability level, which is 40% of the circumstances, not much different from the high level. Furthermore, the high-level probability is the least common and only happens about 19% of the time. Here are some examples and explanations of each probability level found in Joe Biden's speech.

(a). Low Probability

The low probability level is the weakest in measuring how strongly the speaker believes in the possibility of something through his speech. Here is an example of the low probability level that Joe Biden represents through the MV.

*And I **might** add parenthetically. I don't think the Russian people fully understand what Putin is doing.*
(Source: Speech 3)

Joe Biden uttered that clause in his remark on the Ukraine and Russia conflict. By adding 'might,' he thinks the Russian people did not do what Putin is doing. The lexical choice "might" seemingly shows a politeness background. However, as the President of America, it shows that Joe Biden is unwilling to make a complex statement about his idea on Putin's actions. If, in this case, Joe Biden is confident, he does not have to say 'might' instead of just saying 'I think… '. However, his additional lexical item 'might' already downgrades his confidence in his idea that Russia did not know what Putin was doing. Thus, at this point, his clause represents a low probability.

(b). Medium Probability

Nevertheless, less predictable options with a medium likelihood are prevalent in a particular situation. These decisions could indicate variations in the cultural or language norms governing communication in a particular community.

*And for those who remain, we **will** make arrangements to get them out.*
(Source: Speech 1)

The sample above shows that Joe Biden used median probability in delivering his plan to airlift the American soldier during the troop withdrawal in Afghanistan. The idea is that there should be another lexical choice that may symbolize his confidence at a higher level, such as replacing the word 'will' with "definitely." The existence of lexical items which may express a higher level of his choice proves that "will" here indicates Joe Biden into the median probability level.

(c). High Probability

Choices with a high probability are anticipated based on a solid linguistic or cultural norm. These decisions are predictable and frequently regarded as "right" or "normal" in a particular society. For instance, high probability options in English might appropriately use subject-verb agreement or choose the correct verb tense for the situation. The example below shows Joe Biden's choice to express his belief in America's best future by uniting his citizen.

*If we do that, I **guarantee** we **will** not fail.*
(Source: Speech 6)

When giving a speech, utterances to predict something that has yet to happen seem easy to publish. However, there is no guarantee that the prediction will happen. In that space full of possibilities and distorted warranties, probability nests and performs its function to indicate how strongly Joe Biden believes in his prediction by saying 'guarantee.' Logically, nobody knows what will happen in the future, but here Joe is standing to guarantee his prediction and as a leader. He is showing his people that he is confident, which is a part of the interpersonal function of persuading the listener.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis from President Joe Biden's seven speeches, six linguistic forms indicate probability: MV, Adv, Adj, N, and MP. MV is the most often used by Joe Biden to express his belief in his plans or hopes. Indeed, the difference between medium and low probability levels is not too unequal. However, based on the results of data

analysis, it can also be concluded that Joe Biden has high self-confidence. This is evidenced that a high probability level dominates most occurrences of Joe Biden's speech. The distinction between high, medium, and low probability choices in SFL highlights the fact that linguistic choices are not fixed or absolute but are influenced by a range of contextual factors, including linguistic, cultural, and social norms, as well as individual variation and choice such as what Joe Biden used in his speech. However, the critical thing that should be noted from this research is that Joe Biden is confident from the perspective of SFL. Apart from another context, the reality of his action that may be unrelated to linguistic scope may differ. Still, this research took a side from a linguistic perspective, especially probability theory in SFL. Since language is an interpersonal function that persuades or gains listener trust, the probability is significant in shaping public opinion of the leader. Thus, what Joe Biden delivered in his speech shaped his confidence as president in front of his people.

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